Walking Travesty

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/5947426.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warnings:	Major Character Death, Graphic Depictions Of Violence, Rape/Non-Con
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationships:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter, Abigail Hobbs/Original Character(s), Alana Bloom/Margot Verger
Characters:	Will Graham, Will Graham's Dogs, Hannibal Lecter, Alana Bloom, Abigail Hobbs, Garrett Jacob Hobbs, Jack Crawford
Additional Tags:	Asexual Will Graham, Hannigram - Freeform, Hannibal is Not a Cannibal, Fluff, SO MUCH FLUFF, but also a lot of angst, Fluff and Angst, Smut comes in eventually, Will is sex-repulsed asexual, Autistic Will Graham, homoromantic asexual will, bisexual hannibal, They Make It Work, Adopted Abigail Hobbs, Hannibal gets hurt multiple times thoughout, Seriously poor Hannibal, Rape Recovery, Past Abuse, Angst and Fluff and Smut, Switching, Autism, Autism Spectrum, Asperger Syndrome, LGBTQ Themes, Minor Alana Bloom/Hannibal Lecter, Past Relationship(s), Hannibal Loves Will, Will Loves Hannibal, I Will Go Down With This Ship, Masturbation, Mutual Masturbation, Marriage, Soulmates, They're literally soulmates, Garrett Jacob Hobbs needs to fucking die, Implied/Referenced Rape/Non-con, There's just a lot of shit, Abigail is a badass, Cheating, HIV/AIDS, Bottom Hannibal, Top Hannibal, Bottom Will, Top Will, Rimming, Docking, Blow Jobs, Hand Jobs, Hannibal has Feelings, Hannibal has to teach Will how to masturbate, Hannibal gets shot, Hannibal really hates hospitals, Physical Disability, Awesome Alana Bloom, Past Alana Bloom/Hannibal Lecter, Minor Alana Bloom/Margot Verger, Multiple Verger babies, Surrogacy, Contracts, Murder Dads, Murder Family, Happy Murder Family, Murder Husbands, happy murder husbands, Protective Hannibal, Will acts a little like Adam, Domestic, Domestic Fluff, Domestic Bliss, Alternate Universe - Domestic, Love, Falling In Love, They make a lot of sacrifices for each other, Sacrifice, Music
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2016-02-08 Updated: 2016-04-15 Words: 86,456 Chapters: 25/?

Walking Travesty

by orphan_account

Summary

Will Graham had been abandoned. Left with no one but his daughter, who had been traumatized by the abuse of her father, he tries desperately to move on with his life.

Hannibal Lecter was a psychiatrist, wealthy and powerful, the world at his fingertips. But he was alone. No one to love. No one to look after, no one to look after him...

Will Graham walked his daughter through to door for her first (official) therapy session and there he stood.

Hannibal Lecter waited on his newest patient to arrive when the door opened, and there he stood.

Bedroom Hymns

She was leaned against the edge of the bed, her eyes scanning over him from across the room. It certainly would've been tempting to go over to her, run his long fingers through her hair, slam her against the headboard... It would've been tempting to kiss her, tie her down, do whatever he pleased. He was a dom who hadn't had control in quite a long time. It would've been so tempting to take her and do whatever he pleased, especially since she had already eagerly given him the okay, as long as she got a turn to do whatever she pleased, considering that she considered herself versatile, able to sub and dom. And it would've been okay. But as he stood there, watching her as she stared at him, he didn't feel the desire. Once upon a time, it would've been all that he wanted. But now... He just wanted Him.

He missed Him so much.

He wasn't even sure why. He had been a natural dom, wanting to control another person, do whatever he pleased. But Hannibal could never touch Him like this, never be with him so freely, not without explaining exactly what he was going to do before. He had these awful panic attacks whenever anyone touched Him without warning. It took months for Him to even allow the psychiatrist to touch him in a sexual manner, had panicked at the very thought. Their touches had almost always been entirely sensual. Hugs, kisses, but nothing more. He could remember feeling incredibly honored whenever he let him touch him though, seeing the disease in him whenever anyone else did that, whenever someone else laid a hand on him. But it didn't matter now...

Hannibal choked down the thoughts, trying so desperately to focus just on her. He could have her. He could have the firecracker, the spark of lightning, the brave, ambitious girl... He could have her. He couldn't have Him. But he could have Her. He could kiss her and do whatever he wanted with her. And that was all that he needed to focus on right now.

He'd met her months ago, when he was still in the ward. It had almost been two years since the accident. He'd kind of lost it when that happened, lost his mind, his sanity. Everything that he'd been known for had vanished with Him. For a few months, he'd lost himself in this haze. It wasn't until he'd dissociated and nearly got hit by a bus in London that he had finally checked himself into a mental hospital, because he didn't even know how he'd wound up in London. But then he met her. She was a cop. FBI. Like He had always wanted to be. She was like Him in the subtlest of ways, ways that he himself couldn't piece together. But when she talked, when she made sly jokes, when she stood close to him... It was almost painful. But his therapist had encouraged him to move on, to try and find someone new. So as soon as he got back to his home, he burned everything that he had touched, refurnished the place entirely. He had to escape the memories. And then, after that, he called Clarice Starling.

He had to move on.

He inhaled deeply, sharply. Running his hands through his graying hair, he closed his eyes and rolled a tongue over his lips. He had never been allowed to touch Him in this way, not really. Just one week out of the entire year, 7 days out of 365. He had his chance now. He

could finally get what he had been practically desperate for, practically begging for. He let his predatory nature wash over him, and like a lion hungry for a meal, he ripped off his shirt, completely ripping off the buttons, and crawled onto the bed.

She smirked, not saying a word, as he pulled himself over her, wondering what he was going to do to her. He could tie her hands. Bind and gag her. He could do anything he pleased. He wasn't used to this. Before, he had only been allowed to kiss Him. He'd never been allowed to touch Him in that way, but it was always okay, because his love never stopped, never changed, never deterred. But...

"Kiss me, Hannibal." She whispered seductively.

He ran his tongue over his lip and struggled to find a smile. He swooped down low over her, his eyes closing as he did, the world turning to darkness before him as he struggled to find what once would've excited him. His lips found hers, grazing over them for a long moment, her eyes flickering closed. He felt her lips turn up in a small smile. The kiss started off soft and slow, passion tossed out the window as he let his lips hover over hers. After a moment of this nonsense, he felt her grab onto the skin of his back as she pulled him down on her, the kiss becoming harder, more passionate, more heated. And yet, he still felt nothing.

There was nothing.

No passion. No attraction. No heat. Nothing. It was like he wasn't really kissing anything. He liked her, he did. He knew that this would've been fun had he not been so damaged. But now he felt guilty for calling her over. He couldn't just ask her to leave now, could he? It'd be ridiculous. He'd been the one to ask her over, and he'd been the one to set the ground rules... He'd been the one to insinuate all of this. Clarice hadn't asked for this. She had just went along with it because... Well, he wasn't sure why. Maybe she was looking for a one night stand, maybe she was looking for something more than that, maybe she liked him, maybe she was just pitying him... But he couldn't just ask her to leave. He had to go through with it....

His hands drifted down her body, trying to find a place to put them. He wasn't entirely sure what he was supposed to do with them anymore though. When He and Hannibal had kissed, it had always felt so natural. Of course, never going beyond kissing was tricky, and having to hold in all of that sexual frustration was irritating... It had been a tricky situation at first, especially because previous relationships had never been like this. This was the first relationship that had been so tricky...

But now Hannibal had freedom. Freedom to touch. Freedom to kiss. Freedom to do anything he wanted. And it was supposed to be a good thing. This was supposed to be a good thing. His therapist told him that there were perks of being able to go into a new relationship like this. He was able to have more freedom now than when he was with Him. But maybe he didn't want freedom anymore. Maybe he wanted true love over sexual, physical liberation. Maybe he wanted Him instead of the whole world. Maybe he would burn the whole world down and recklessly abandon everything he had just to be with Him again.

"Hannibal." She whispered, pushing away from his touch, with some relief to him.

"Clarice." He replied, unsure of what else to say.

"There's someone else, isn't there?"

He paused. He'd been obvious, though not on purpose. He held his breath for a moment before deciding that he wasn't going to tell her. She knew that he'd been in a psychiatric ward. She knew that there had been an accident that had forced him there. But she didn't know why he'd been forced there. She didn't know why she hurt so badly. She didn't really know anything about any of it. She hadn't asked, and he hadn't told her. It was too painful to say His name. So he just ignored her question and kissed her again, only to be shoved off. God, she was strong.

"Hannibal. I'm cool with being your one night stand, I'm cool with being your girlfriend, I'm cool with whatever you want because I like you. So if you want me to sleep with you because you're horny and haven't been laid in months, that's cool. Or maybe you like me too and we can do something or whatever. We could go out or something. But I'm not going to sleep with you just because you want me to replace someone. You're really distant, and I can tell. I'll sleep with you because I want to, but I'm not going to take advantage of you. I won't be some replacement for you. I'm not someone you can project a face onto. You either do this with me, or you can fantasize about someone else on your own."

"Clarice, I want it to be you. I like you. A lot. I do. Just... I'm just not quite over my last relationship."

"I get that. But you can't use me to get over it."

"That was never my intention."

"Yes, it was. I can tell. Whether you realize it or not, you just wanted to use me to get over your ex."

"Don't psychoanalyze me."

"I'm not! We just need to set boundaries. I think you need to talk to someone about this. I can be that someone, if you want me to. Maybe we can work through this, and then get back some doing some more interesting things."

Fingers trailed over his arm slowly as he sighed, rolling over onto the other side of the bed. He groaned and ran a hand through his hair, shoving a pillow over his face for a long moment, closing his eyes. He felt her scoot up into sitting position before running a hand through his hair, already damp with sweat.

"Tell me what happened. Why did you break up?"

"We didn't break up."

"Then what happened?"

"Illness and stupidity that ended in tragedy."

"She... Died?"

"Yes. Almost two years ago."

"I'm sorry... I'm sorry, Hannibal, I had no idea..."

"No, no, it's okay. You couldn't have known. I let no indication of what happened slip through. I wouldn't. I couldn't."

"Well... Um... Tell about what happened. Tell me everything. Tell me your story. I've lost people too, you know. And I've found it very helpful to talk about. To not let their memory serve as painful."

He inhaled slowly. He knew that she was right. He hadn't talked about it to anyone but his therapist, and even then, he was quiet about it. He hadn't said their names since the accident. Every time he tried, he burst into tears, even two years later. He hadn't taken off his ring, hadn't stopped thinking about them. He still slept over the covers, and always expected to find Him there every morning. He still reached over, expecting to find his lovers hand, only to find cold bed... It had taken him months to actually sleep in a bed because of how awful mornings felt. Took him days after the accident to actually go to sleep. Part of him had hoped that he would die from exhaustion...

He needed to talk about it before he could move on.

"It started with a doorway. Well, technically, it started with my one o'clock appointment on January the seventh for a young girl named Abigail. That was my patient, and I loved Abigail, but... Abigail became my daughter. I fell in love with her guardian. But if you want to go back even further than that... It started with a phone call on December 16th. A simple phone call to schedule our first appointment. I didn't know what I was hearing at the time, but that was the first conversation I ever had with my love. A worried voice, overwhelmed and stretched far too thin... There was sobbing in the background, presumably Abigail's. I'm still not sure what provoked the sobbing, but it was comparable to my own when I learned of... The accident."

"I'm sorry, Hannibal... I'm so sorry."

"Don't be. If anyone is at fault for the accident, it's me. It was me that pushed them out the door. I caused it. It's my fault. I do not deserve sympathy."

"Don't... Don't tell me about the accident. Tell me everything else."

"I don't know where to begin. It's a rather long story."

"Start simple... Like, what was her name?"

"His name was Will Graham. And he was the love of my life."

Heartless

6 years ago

The pain in his body racked through him as he tugged the blanket further up onto his bare body. There was blood on the sheets, soaking through. He wasn't sure where the blood was coming from, but he knew that it was still coming through. He felt the blankets and sheets getting wetter as the blood continued to pool. He felt dirty and disgusting, but he couldn't will himself to move. He couldn't move.

He knew that he needed to get up. He knew that he had to pull himself out of bed and fight him, kick him out of the house. But there was too much pain for him to even move. He was going to die here. He knew that he needed to get up... But he couldn't do it. Everything felt as if it weighed a million pounds. Everything hurt. Everything burned... The blood wouldn't stop coming...

He had been trying so hard to convince himself that this was normal. Will had never been in a serious relationship before this. And he'd always heard that people change after marriage. But he never thought that his own husband would turn on him this quickly. He had always been so kind and smart and generous... Until one day he wasn't anymore.

He started screaming. He started yelling foul things at their daughter. At Will. He started doing things further than what Will was willing to go. He was autistic, and he was asexual. He had always known that, and before they got married, he had always been okay with it. He had always respected boundaries. And then, one day, he stopped caring about boundaries. It never went far enough for Will to consider rape, but it was enough to leave him sobbing on that bathroom floor for a few hours.

And then it went over the edge.

Abby had gotten home late from school. She'd gone out with a few friends instead of coming straight home like she was supposed to. Which was okay with Will. He wanted her to have the friends that he never had in school. He just wanted her to be happy. He loved Abby more than he loved anyone else. She was what he held onto when the abuse started. But that day, when she got home late, her father, her real father, her biological father, had hit her. And then he took a belt to the side of her face. It was then that Will got home from work, expecting to go into his office and start grading papers before getting the harassment from his husband that he was getting every night at this point. But they were standing in the kitchen, and he was beating her with his belt so badly that her face was bloody and her eyes were swollen shut.

And Will did something stupid.

He grabbed the belt and yanked it out of his hands.

It gave Abigail time to run out of the house, but it turned his wrath towards Will. And then the abuse started, only this time it was so much worse. He grabbed Will by the hair, screaming and cursing the whole way down the hall, and he did what he assumed he had always wanted to do. Autistic, asexual, quiet, shy, awkward, mentally-unstable Will Graham was brutally raped and beaten by his own husband.

It was so much worse than he ever could've imagined. Will was still a virgin, or he had been. He had always been horrified of touch, of sex. He liked hugs, hand-holding, kissing sometimes... But anything past that repulsed him, scared him. And he had always respected it. Never pushed him too far, too hard. He was so good about it... Until one day, he just wasn't. He was kind until he wasn't. A good husband until he wasn't. A good man until he wasn't.

He didn't love him anymore. Garrett Jacob Hobbs was an abuser.

He had been so horrible. He had grabbed him and thrown him on the bed, turning him around and doing what he pleased until Will was screaming and begging him to stop. It hurt so much... It hurt so much...

What he had done was so much worse than what he could've ever imagined, and he'd imagined it time and time again. Ever since he changed, ever since he'd snapped and turned into the monster that he'd become, he imagined this night every time that Garrett would climb into bed next to him, disregarding the request that he had always kept of one of them sleeping above the sheets and one sleeping below. He imagined it vividly, but it was so much worse than anything that he had come up with.

He lay in bed, feeling the tears roll down his cheeks to the point where they were coming down in buckets. His body quivered and shook as he sobbed, only causing more and more blood to come from unknown places. He just knew that it hurt and the sheets below him were getting wetter, to the point where he was almost certain that it was soaking through the sheets, the mattress, and all the way to the floor.

He was lying on his back, blood soaked sheets starting to become more than just wet sheets. They were becoming a river, a lake, an ocean, trying to swallow him up. His face began to bead with sweat as he gasped for air, looking around the room for something to clutch onto. He grabbed at air, trying harder and harder to find something, but he couldn't move. He couldn't roll off the bed. He couldn't run. He couldn't escape.

The blood started to wash over him in tides, washing over his neck and head and mouth and nose to the point that he couldn't breathe for long seconds at a time before it went back down and he could sputter for as much air as he could get before it would wash back over him. Again and again and again... He couldn't move, couldn't breathe, couldn't do anything but sit there and choke on the sea of his own blood.

And as it washed over him for the last time, he turned toward the doorway one more time, almost certain that Garrett Jacob Hobbs had come to take him out, to finish the job... But all he saw was a black, humanoid creature, taller than any human he'd ever seen. Its body was cloaked in complete darkness, not a color to be seen, almost as if it were sucking in all the light from the room... And there was a set of giant antlers sitting on its head...

The devil.

Will screamed.

His entire body was drenched in sweat, sheets wet and hair matted to his head. He screamed, his body shaking and everything trembling. He was so afraid. It was almost like he was still sitting in the same bed, waiting for his husband to come back for a second round...

He never did come back. And it was on that night, still all bloody and broken and hurting and wounded, that he decided that he couldn't stay here. He couldn't stay and wait to be beaten again. He couldn't just sit and wait for his own husband to rape him so viciously again. He couldn't just sit and wait. He had to get out. Even as an autistic, he was smart enough to know that he couldn't cleave to his husband any longer. People had this idea that autistic people were stupid and didn't know when to leave. But Will wasn't stupid or naive or innocent. And he wasn't so hopelessly in love with an idea anymore. Will had never felt love so strong that he'd die just to hold onto the idea. He still had a hope of escape. And, before he could touch either of them again, they ran.

They left him.

He'd taken Abby and ran after that. He knew that he wouldn't be able to take any more of that. He couldn't take being abused anymore. He couldn't take the stress, the constant hovering... He didn't want to have to walk on broken glass. He didn't want to see the man that he thought that maybe he loved everyday and know that he made a horrible, horrible mistake. He didn't want to live like this. He couldn't take the fear of his little girl getting hurt the moment that he left the house for school every morning. He couldn't risk losing Abigail too.

Abigail was his light.

Abigail was the reason he'd stayed this long. He didn't care much for living with someone else. And if it had been up to him, he would've ran long before then. He would've ran off the moment that Garrett Jacob Hobbs had taken Will Graham's hand and shoved it down the waistband of his jeans against his will. He would've ran the moment that Garrett Jacob Hobbs stopped respecting personal boundaries. But the adoption process hadn't gone through, and Abigail was still only 16... Charges could be pressed if Abigail wasn't legally his and he ran off with her.

But the adoption process finally went through a week before, and he could finally get out. He could finally get her out of there. He could finally protect her. He could finally keep her safe. And that was when he knew that it was alright to leave. And he had been plotting his escape for weeks, some grand escapade that would save them both, leave no trace that they had ever existed in the life of Garrett Jacob Hobbs, make sure that he never found them. Completely disappear.

That wasn't what happened though.

So as soon as he was able to get out of bed, he packed everything into a small bag, gathered his seven dogs, took Abigail from her bedroom. It wasn't at all how he'd planned their great

escape being. It was sloppy and it forced them to leave so much behind, but it was the best that either of them could manage.

He was hardly able to move, everything still burning and stretched and aching to the point where the memory still made Will cringe and ache. He'd thrown in a few t-shirts that he knew he couldn't go without, packed up his books, his laptop, and whatever else he could fit. He'd struggled to let things go, especially because he felt like he needed everything to feel at home, to feel at ease. Everything would be askew if he didn't have everything. But he knew that he couldn't bring everything. He'd have to manage without his things, but it still felt so wrong...

And then he woke up Abby. She had cried herself to sleep judging by the wet pillowcase. He'd helped her hastily throw her things into a bag, though it was hard because he wanted her to have everything that she needed, deserved. He couldn't give her everything like he had planned though. They weren't given days to pack, or even hours. They were given minutes. So she threw in a few shirts and jeans, whatever other things she needed, and a stuffed bear that her mother had presented her with before the accident. She swore that she was alright, but he still wanted to give her the world. Or at least what was left of it for him to give her.

They crept out of the house quietly not waiting for Garrett, who was now passed out drunk on the couch, to wake up. He'd been evidently out for hours, snoring as some infomercial blared on the small TV screen in front of them. The light from the TV had cast long shadows that made him scared to move, but the white noise comforted him as they crept out, knowing it would mask their footsteps.

He took the car and, at 3 in the morning, he sent the car driving as quickly as it would go, all the way across the state line, afraid that if he stopped driving then Garrett would find them. He would catch them. And he would kill them both.

That was almost six months ago.

Will had gotten a steady-ish teaching job at a college in Baltimore. He'd been born and raised in Pennsylvania, but he couldn't bring himself to cross the state line again. So they were living in Maryland, and Will had gotten a steady job teaching neuroscience primarily. And it was something that he was good at. Giving lectures, talking at them about something he was passionate.. He'd always wanted to be a cop, but he'd been denied too many times. Too mentally unstable. Unable to adjust to rough hours. So he just memorized everything and became a teacher in it and the neurology of these psychopaths. He taught the best he could, but he still got anxious, still had to call in sick a little too often. They gave him days off, they let him off the hook because of his Asperger's, because he physically couldn't handle coming in all of the time but, damn, if he wasn't a damned good teacher. He knew he was a good teacher, good at giving lectures. Maybe that was why he kept doing it.

He was just so scared.

Garrett could still find him if he wanted. He knew that he should cover his tracks better, but he couldn't seem to entirely erase himself from the face of the earth. He'd deleted every social media account he had, tried to delete everything that tied him to the world as he had once known it. But with this new job, it would be so easy to find him. Just a simple Google search

would give him away... There would always be something tying him to the past. There would always be something that Garrett Jacob Hobbs could use to find them.

So far he hadn't come looking, but it didn't mean it couldn't change at any given moment.

They had a home. An apartment. It wasn't perfect yet, and it bothered him every time he stepped inside, knowing that something was off, that there needed to be something. But otherwise, it was fine. Close enough to the school for Abigail to walk. Cozy. Two bedrooms. They weren't thriving, not that they had been with Garrett, but it was enough. They were surviving. And maybe someday they could rule the world again.

But until then, he was laying in his bed, his 7 smuggled-in dogs lying at the end of the bed, Winston curled up at his feet... And he was screaming.

Once Upon a Dream

6 years ago

His latest girlfriend, his latest submissive, his latest whatever, had finally walked out on him. Not because of normal reasons. She was just done. That was all that she said. She didn't give him a reason, an explanation, nothing. She just walked out on him. Packed up her things and left. And it was bitter. It was a bitter loneliness. He didn't love her, but he cared about her enough to miss her presence, to be painfully aware of her absence.

Her name was Bedelia. She was smart. Caring. Concerned. She was a little smarter than him, which he found annoying, not because she was a woman but because he was so used to being the brightest mind in the room. She was upstanding and brilliant and beautiful in a lot of ways, and he thought that she was amazing. But one day she just decided that she was done with him and she walked out. Couldn't figure out why. Didn't know what he could do to fix it. He just knew that it hurt him.

Bu he couldn't dwell on her loss. He was accomplished and powerful and he had to keep doing what he had been doing. His job was to fix other peoples' problems. He couldn't let his own drown him in sorrows to the point that he couldn't do his job. He just needed to keep going and doing whatever he was doing.

Even if it meant coming home to an empty bed. Even if it meant seeing the word in dull colors again. Even if it meant lying everyday and saying that he wasn't lonely. Even if it meant hiding behind a mask of constant okay-ness. Even if it meant turning the radio down lower every night when he used to blare it loud, the ringing of orchestra just a little softer now because every major note and every happy song reminded him of her. Even if it meant the unbearable ache of being alone, even as he claimed to hate people and to love solitude.

He didn't. He didn't love solitude. He despised the silence because it meant that his own demons had the chance to come to light. Not only that, but there was more to it. He missed her. He missed the warmth of her skin in the bed next to him. He missed waking up to the smell of coffee and the sound of bare feet padding against the tile floor. He missed seeing her first thing in the morning with nothing but a very loosely tied robe around her waist. He missed her. He missed the company.

But he wasn't allowed to show that in his daily life.

He brought any girl he came across to his dinner parties. Having such a long list of contacts, it wasn't hard to find a beautiful woman to be his date. But none of them stayed for anything more than a night, just another one night stand. And none of them were Bedelia. He had to put on his mask at work as people cried about their problems to him, forced to bottle up his own feelings. He had no one to talk to. He supposed that was what happened when you started sleeping with your psychiatrist.

It happened six months before, and he hadn't seen her since. Sometimes he thought that he saw her. Sometimes out of the corner of his eyes he thought he caught a glimpse of his

Bedelia. But when he turned, it was just some other blonde woman, beautiful and similar, but still not her. Still not Bedelia.

He'd been coping as best as he could.

He sat there quietly, listening as his patient, a heavier set man with severe anxiety and trouble making friends, sobbed hysterically into his hands. Hannibal just sat there, thinking. Thinking about Bedelia. Forcing thoughts of her out of his head. Thinking about what to cook for dinner tonight. Wondering if he was ever going to find someone else. Thinking.

"I just feel like I'm going insane... I... I..." He sobbed.

Hannibal didn't reply. He just tossed the crying man a box of tissues. He wasn't so in the mood for common courtesy today. He just wanted to be left alone. That was, of course, how he'd felt for the majority of the time these days. But...

The next hour passed quickly, and he ushered his patient quickly out of the office. He desperately needed to be alone, and he didn't have another patient for another 3 hours. He exhaled slowly as he shut the door behind him, practically collapsing against the wall as he left. He hated feeling this way, but everyone felt wrong when he talked to them. It was as if Bedelia was the only one who could feel the gaping hole. He didn't love her. He had never loved anyone or anything. But he surely missed her company.

Missed her presence.

Before he knew what was happening, he was sitting at his harpsichord.

Everything felt like it was going in a haze, fading in and out of reality. He wasn't sure why, but sometimes he forgot the hazy moments, and he just found himself living in this presence. He was sitting at his beloved harpsichord, his fingers on the keys, stroking them, wondering what to play and what to do. He swore that he didn't actually know how to play. Something just took him over and he was playing.

His fingers played a familiar tune over the keys of the harpsichord, bringing a sweet sound to his ears. He had played it so many times, but never without Bedelia. She was his muse. She was his partner. She would often come and sit next to him, her fingers cupped beneath his as he played, showing her how to play. She sat between his legs, so close that he could smell her shampoo, so close that he could feel the heat of her skin, close enough that her breathing always matched his...

In some ways, it was the most intimate thing that they could ever do.

When she wasn't sitting between his legs as he played it, she was on the other side of it. He was somewhere caught between the keys and her eyes whenever she did this, like he was caught in some other dimension. She was almost always in her favorite yellow, silk robe when she stood across from him, leaning over so that her eyes could see his fingers moving across the keys. Her blonde hair was almost always still damp from her morning shower, the ones that she insisted she take alone. She would sing the words to the song as she stood

across from him, her voice singing him into this realm of near-unconsciousness, like sleeping with his eyes open...

But now, there was nothing but an empty silence.

She wasn't in sync with his breathing anymore. She couldn't smell her shampoo or taste her skin on his lips as he kissed her shoulder. He couldn't reach that place of nirvana where nothing mattered but the sound of her voice. He couldn't touch her. Couldn't feel her. And for the hundredth time that day, he felt completely and utterly alone.

That was when his phone rang.

It startled him, causing him to miss a note in his playing, bringing him out of his self-pity and sorrow and back into the real world. He shook his head as it rang a second time and stood up quickly, bolting as quickly as his old legs would carry him. He had just turned 50 last month, and it was terrifying. He tried so desperately to cling to his youth, but he couldn't anymore. He couldn't hold on anymore. He was fifty. Old. Jesus, he was old now. And while his mind maintained a certain youthful curiosity for all things in good taste, he knew that his body was getting weaker. He was getting weaker.

He forced that to the back of his mind as the pain shot up his knee and he slid into the chair, grabbing the phone on the way down.

He answered quickly as it approached on its fourth ring, pulling it to his ear quickly. In the background he heard loud, distraught sobs. They didn't appear to be coming from the person holding the phone, but obviously the therapy session was for the person sobbing in the background. He'd never heard tears like that before. Not from patients, not from his own sobs that he found himself crying into his pillow on the regular these days...

"Dr. Lecter, how may I help you?" He answered, trying to hide his curiosity, trying to sound completely professional through his thick Danish accent.

"Hi, I... I need to... I need to schedule an appointment." He stuttered, sounding distraught, almost as distraught as the person sobbing in the background.

"Yes, of course. May I ask who I am speaking with?"

"My name is... Is... My name is Will... Will Graham. I need to schedule an appointment for... For my daughter. Preferably as soon as possible."

"Of course. May I ask what for?"

"Huh?"

"What is the appointment for? Grief, mental illness, social issues...?"

"She was abused by her other dad. My ex. She... Um... She... She's not sleeping. And... She was driving home from school earlier. She thought that she saw her dad on the side of the road. She didn't, but she thought that she did and... She nearly crashed the car. And... Um... I don't... I don't know how to help her."

Other dad. Very interesting. Very interesting indeed. It meant that Will Graham, the man on the other end of the line, was attracted to men in one way or another. Dr. Lecter himself was bisexual, and fairly open in his sexuality. And from the way that he sounded on the phone, he sounded fairly... Cute. He wasn't sure how, but judging by the way that he sounded... It almost sounded like his newest patient's father could be someone to help him deal with his own loss. His own grief.

No.

He had to get back to business. He was letting his own loneliness cloud his judgment, just as he had been for the past six months. He couldn't let some poor girl hurt any further just because he was lonely. Especially not after hearing that she had just been in a near-accident. She needed help. Especially with all that wheezing on the other side of the phone.

"Firstly, is she okay? Was she injured?"

"No... No... She's fine. She's fine. She made it home. She's okay."

"Okay. Will she be okay if we wait to get an appointment in, or should I see her as soon as possible?"

"Yeah, I... I think so. I guess so. She's... She's really scared, and I don't know... She's seeing him everywhere. She says she hasn't slept in 3 days. She's getting nightmares... And I... I just don't know how to help her. I... I've never been a dad before, and... I mean... She's still... I... I just don't know what to do. I don't know how to help her."

"I see. You are not alone. This sort of thing is common in many abuse victims. Let me tell you that. You are not alone. May I ask you if you are safe?"

"Safe?"

"Safe. Is there anyone there who is going to hurt you? Are you being abused? By Abigail's other father, perhaps?"

"No. No. We left him six months ago. But... It... It was bad, Dr. Lecter. I... We're safe. We're okay."

"I had to make sure."

"I understand."

There was a long pause between the two. They sounded truly desperate. He knew that therapy wasn't meant for the people going through crisis, but those dealing with the aftermath. And perhaps this was the aftermath. But he knew what he could do for both of them.

"What is her name?"

"Abigail. Abigail Hobbs."

"Okay. Okay. She's how old?"

"16."

"Okay. Okay, yes. I can get her in tomorrow afternoon for a first session, unless you want to swing by now. It sounds fairly urgent. Is she having an anxiety attack?"

"I... I don't know. I'm sorry. I don't know. She's never done this before."

"Is she shaking?"

"Yes. Yes, really hard."

"Is she hyperventilating?"

"I think so."

"Hot flashes or chills?"

"She's wrapped in like 5 blankets. Yeah, I think so."

Definitely an anxiety attack. The breathing that sounded like screaming, the uncontrollable sobbing... She was having an anxiety attack of the highest degree. He wasn't sure that he'd ever heard one so bad. And the man on the phone, who seemed to have some sort of anxiety disorder himself, obviously didn't know how to help her. He sounded like a caring father, definitely loved his daughter, but he just didn't know how to help her through this sort of thing. Perhaps because no one had been there to help him through his own. But Hannibal knew how to take care of this sort of thing. It was his job to know how to take care of it.

"I think that you should bring her in. Can you tell me where you are?"

"I'm in Baltimore."

"Do you know where my office is?"

"Yes."

"How far away are you?"

"Five minutes... Ten, tops."

"Okay. I want you to bring her to me. I can help her calm down, if you will let me."

"Okay."

The line went dead after that. He wasn't quite sure what had just happened. How something like this had happened so quickly. All he knew was that one moment he had been expecting a few hours of peace. And now he had a job to take care of. And her name was Abigail Hobbs.

December Rain

White knuckles. Pouring rain smacking the windshield. Sweat beading at the base of his forehead. Cars zooming past in all directions. Dry mouth. Cars honking. Body shaking. Daughter wheezing to the point where each labored breath sounded like a scream for help. Eyes blurring. Heat radiating off of her body. Chest wracked with pain.

Will Graham was in sensory overload, and it was going to take him everything inside of him not to have a panic attack. He knew that he needed to keep things in check, couldn't allow himself to meltdown while Abigail needed him desperately. But there was too much... Too much at once... Too much noise...

Abigail was still wheezing in the backseat. Something was wrong. Will had had panic attacks before, but this was wrong. This was lasting too long. She'd been panicking and crying for almost an hour, when Will's never lasted more than 20 minutes. It felt wrong. What if there was something seriously wrong with her? What if she could die from this?

What if this took the only hope he had left in his life?

He tried not to think about it.

Abigail had come home sobbing. She took the car to school, as she usually did on Mondays and Wednesdays, the days when Will was off. He was teaching at a college, and he made sure that he only had classes a few days a week so that he didn't work himself to death. So on those days, Abigail always took the car to school. But she came home that day differently. She pulled into the parking lot outside their apartment, Will watching out the window for her with a blanket wrapped around his shoulders and a mug of hot coffee in his hands.

He waited for her to get out of the car like she always did. She always would reach over, turn off the music. Then she would climb out of the car and walk over to the passengers side. She'd open the door, grab her backpack, and she would hurry inside. She always greeted him with the standard "Hey, Dad." and then proceed to ask him about his day. He would tell her the lot of it, though there was rarely much to tell. And he'd ask about her day, and she'd tell him all about school. The boy she liked, what her friends were planning this weekend. They'd sit there and drink coffee together before starting on her homework, which he always helped her with... It was a lovely routine, really.

But today it was different.

She sat there for a long time. She didn't take either hand off of the wheel to turn off the music. She didn't climb out of the car. She didn't walk around to grab her bags. She didn't come inside and ask about his day. She just sat there. Her face was unusually pale and her eyes extremely wide. Her white knuckles gripped desperately to the steering wheel, and she looked like she couldn't move if she wanted to. She looked like a statue.

Like she was frozen.

After a few minutes, Will bolted up out of his seat, abandoning his coffee mug and his blanket, and bolted out the door. He knew that there was something wrong. He dashed to the car, threw the door open. His hand grabbed her arm, trying to get her to react to something. But as his fingers made contact with her skin, she snapped out of it, only to start screaming a slew of curses, telling him to get off. She started screaming, and she looked absolutely terrified. She began hyperventilating, screaming, crying, sobbing... He hoisted her up in his arms and ran her inside the house, wrapping her up as she cried. It took almost 20 minutes to calm her down enough to figure out what had happened... And then he called Lecter.

The memory, reliving it, wasn't helping with the sensory issues.

His hands found themselves gripping a little tighter to the steering wheel as he drove as quickly as he could through the Baltimore streets. He heard his daughter wheezing in the backseat as she continued to cry, sobbing louder than anything he'd ever heard. They sounded like sirens blaring with every inhale and exhale, slamming against his throbbing eardrums as he drove. Driving was hard enough with the sound of the road below him and the cars passing... It was already too loud on its own. But with her screeching sobs... It was almost enough to send him into sensory overload.

Will Graham was autistic. Closer to the Asperger's side of the spectrum, though missing Asperger's and hitting high-functioning autism by a couple of millimeters. He was prone to panic attacks. He was prone to massive depressive episodes. He was prone to nightmares. He was prone to insomnia. He was prone to having days when he couldn't force himself to leave to house, or even say a word to his own daughter, the daughter he loved.

And it made things so much harder to be a good parent.

He knew that going into the marriage. He knew that he wasn't going to be the parent that Abigail needed. He knew that she was going to have to rely on Garrett for that. He wanted to be her friend, but he knew that she couldn't be her full-time father. He didn't have the mental capacity to care for both himself and his daughter. If he tried to be a father all on his own, someone's mental health, or health in general, was going to be neglected.

And he knew that when he walked out of the marriage.

He knew that he was going to hurt Abigail. He had known that from the day that he walked out of the house. He knew that he was going to hurt her in some way, shape or form, whether it be neglecting her mental health or neglecting her physical health or just neglecting her in general. He wasn't a suitable parent. It took too much effort to take care of himself, let alone another human being all on his own...

But he was responsible enough to know that he couldn't flip out right then and there. He had to keep things together. He couldn't let his overdriven senses force him into a state of panic. He couldn't let his own sheer terror cause him to swerve off the road and hurt her because he could no longer control his own two hands. He couldn't hurt her. He had to suck it up. He sucked in a deep breath and forced his mouth open, even though today was most certainly a day when he did not feel like talking to anyone about anything.

"Are you okay?" He called back to the backseat, trying to attract his mind somewhere but the noise.

"No." She answered simply between two ragged sobs.

His arm quivered as he reached back, taking his hands from the ten-and-two position that he'd grown so used to. It took a lot to move them, everything screaming at him, telling him that he was going to crash, that he would swerve and wreck and kill them both. A long list of worst case scenarios scrolled in front of his eyes, only to remind him that if they died now then he would never get to watch Abigail graduate or get married or do spectacular things with her life, things he never did. But still he managed to move his hands, keeping one hand firmly on the 12 o'clock position with white knuckles as he sat the other on his daughter's knee, doing all he knew to comfort her.

He couldn't focus on her and the road. His fingers began to quiver on her knee, and just touching her made him a bit uncomfortable. He really didn't care for touch in general, but when he was over-stimulated... It was too much for him to touch someone. His hand began to quiver as panic raced through his mind, a thousand signals screaming at him to keep both hands on the wheel...

"Are you having a day, Daddy?" She whispered as the sobs began to relent a bit, though not quite.

"Honey, I'm fine." He snapped, a little too harshly.

"No you aren't." She whispered, moving his hand from her knee, telling him it was okay.

His hands shifted back into normal position, his senses starting to shift back into normal. Abigail was starting to calm down, sobbing turning into a steady cry and only gasping for air every few minutes. She was going to be okay. He inhaled slowly, closing his eyes as he turned into Dr. Lecter's office. He could help her more than he could... But it didn't mean that it wasn't going to be difficult for Will. He'd already made a phone call, and those were draining enough on bad days like this one. But now he was going to have to confront a new person and be professional about it...

"I can go in alone, Dad." She whispered.

"No. Listen, no. I'm your father, I need to go in with you..." He panted, eyes blurry as he struggled to park.

"Dad. Let me go in alone. I'm okay. You stay here. I can't have both of us freaking out in the same day. And I don't need two car accidents in one day, okay?" She whispered, seeming to calm down.

He just nodded, inhaling sharply. He watched her as she pulled herself out of the car, abandoning her blankets. She let the rain wash away the tears that had lingered on her cheeks. Her wet hair now soaked, her red eyes now paled.... She stood outside his door for a long moment before finally walking toward the door and disappearing inside.

And Will was alone again.

Sitting in his car, hands still clutching the wheel with white knuckles and burning ears and stinging eyes. He gasped for breath. How could he be such a terrible father? He couldn't even protect his own daughter. He couldn't even help her. And to top it all off, he couldn't even walk her into the building to see a stranger who could help her.

He was a failure.

He failed as an adult. He could hardly even take care of himself, because he had to keep a schedule that didn't allow exceptions. He could barely handle change in general. He lived with his parents all through college because he couldn't take the change. He had never even lived on his own before. He moved straight in with Garrett after college. And then he had Abigail... He couldn't even live on his own because if he did that, he might never leave the house, or he might forget to eat, or he'd get so wrapped up in something that he'd run himself into exhaustion... He had failed.

He failed as a lover. He couldn't handle being touched by the man that he had fallen so desperately in love with at one point. He didn't let his own husband touch him because the thought of sex was too painful. He failed as a lover because he couldn't be one. He couldn't give the person he had loved what he wanted, what he needed. And perhaps that was the reason why he changed, the reason why he snapped.

He had failed as a husband. He had failed to keep Garrett from changing, from becoming the monster that still haunted his nightmares. He had failed to keep his marriage together. He had failed to keep it all from going sour. He had failed to give himself the life that he thought that he could have with Garrett. He failed.

He had failed as a father. He had failed to take care of his own daughter. He had failed to make sure that she was okay, that she was stable. He forgot that she had lived through the abuse too, possibly for longer than he had. He let her sit there and suffer until she finally snapped. He had failed her. He had failed.

It wasn't until that moment that he started screaming.

The Calm

There was always a calm after the storm. Hannibal knew it all too well. He'd seen the calm, felt the calm. The smell of rain still fresh on your skin, but it was no longer pounding against flesh like needles. Your hair still dripped in your eyes, but it was beginning to dry, frizzing up and messy but still manageable now. It was peace. But it was also exhaustion.

Abigail Hobbs had walked in without her father. She settled into the chair across from him, pulling her knees to her chest, looking exhausted, drained. Her already-pale face looked drained from any color, causing her freckles to stick out like stars against the night sky. Her lips had lost any color they may have once had. She looked cold and sick and miserable... But she looked okay. She looked alive. She looked like she was going to be okay. Maybe not right then, maybe not tomorrow, maybe not in a week, or month, or year. But it looked like someday she would be okay.

The only sound in the room for a long while was the roar of the crackling fireplace and the distant honking of horns from outside and the quiet hum of their own shallow breaths. He didn't say much at first, not speaking until she wanted to. This was about her, after all. Though Hannibal did find himself a bit disappointed when he was unable to meet the man on the other end of the phone, though he couldn't place a finger on why. But this wasn't about her father. This was about Abigail Hobbs, and helping her recover.

"My dad's in the car. He can't come in." She finally whispered, that being the first thing that she said.

"Why is that, if you don't mind me asking?" Hannibal replied, trying not to seem too pushy.

"He's autistic, and he's having a bad day. Routine got interrupted. And he's not sleeping. I heard him pacing the halls at 3 in the morning. So... He doesn't do very well. He hasn't been ever since... Ever since we left Garrett. Or even before that. But... He's been really bad at socializing and stuff since then. Like... Sometimes he won't talk to me for days. And it's kind of scary. But he's having a day, probably because of me. And he can't come in." She whispered, voice shaky.

"I see. That's fine. This does not require him. This is about you and me, and helping you recover. But he obviously plays a bit role in your life. Do you want to tell me about him?" He inquired, in part for her sake, in part for his own.

"Yeah. I mean... He's my sole provider. He's basically my dad right now. He is my dad right now. My only dad. The only one that matters, anyways. But no... I don't know if I want to talk about him. Not really."

"Oh?" A sinking feeling started in Hannibal's chest. He wanted to know more about this mysterious Will Graham.

"Well... I mean... I guess so. I just... He's never been the problem. He's not the reason I was freaking out. Will is awesome. He's always helped me through stuff like this, or at least tried

to. He's not the reason behind my... Uh... Anxiety attack. No... It's my real dad."

"You don't always have to focus on the negative, Abigail. Especially not after an episode like this. You are allowed to talk about the good things in your life. Like Will Graham, or school, or anything. I'm just here to listen. And I have found talking about the better things in life can help you stop feeling so anxious."

"I just don't know where to start."

Hannibal let a small smile creep over his lips, though hardly noticeable. He had these permanently pursed lips, never letting a smile fully break through onto his face. He was a rock. But there was something so appealing about this stranger. He wasn't even sure why. From what he could tell, Will Graham sounded difficult. Damaged. Broken. Certainly not what Hannibal was looking for. Even though he was a dominant, loved being dominant, inflicting pain on willing participants.... He liked people who were strong. Submissive but not willing to admit it. He liked being the only person that his lovers would submit to. But Will sounded broken...

Maybe he was just attracted to pain, no matter what form it came in.

"Start from the beginning." He finally suggested.

"Okay... I mean... Will's a good guy. Really. I love him. He saved me from my dad. From Garrett. And Will is... He's crazy strong. He's insane. I mean, I know he's got some damage, but he hasn't broken down after everything that happened. Not completely. He still teaches. He's taking care of me. He's found a new schedule, which was really hard. I remember when he first moved in with my dad and I... And he... He was uncomfortable. Garrett had to remind him to do stuff and it was kind of weird. But he's adapted so well, and the abuse was so much worse on him than it was on anybody else."

"How so?"

"Well, my dad raped him. It was just once, and I mean, rape is disgusting... But it was worse on him I think. Like... He's asexual. Will's a homoromantic asexual. It's... It's uh... It's like being gay. But he doesn't like sex. He's... He doesn't experience sexual attraction. And he's sex-repulsed. That's what he told me a long time ago. When I asked him why he and my dad were fighting about sex all the time. Homoromantic asexual." She stammered.

"I am aware of the term. Go on." Hannibal replied, something in his chest starting to sink a bit. Asexual.

Could Hannibal ever be with someone who was asexual, when sex was something of a big deal to him? He was probably a bit overly fond of sex himself. But there was something about this Will Graham that kept him intrigued. Something that made him want to hear everything about the man. He just seemed so... Endlessly fascinating. And there was something about the way that they spoke on the phone that kept him hooked.

Either that... Or he was just hopelessly desperate.

Which wasn't out of the question either. He was missing Bedelia so badly, missing a meaningful relationship so badly... Maybe he was just desperate for someone to love him, someone that he could love and honor and protect. Maybe he was just desperate, and maybe he was seeking opportunity in this stranger. This damaged, broken, in-need-of-repairing stranger. Maybe he just wanted to save someone. Maybe he just wanted to be someone's hero again.

He couldn't have this stranger. It felt so weird thinking about someone he had never even met in that way. He had never been as desperate for love as he was right then. He had resorted to thinking of his patient's father as a potential lover, potential something... But...

"Yeah. He's... He's asexual, but he's really embarrassed about it because they keep telling him that it's because of the autism. And they keep saying that he's damaged. And he just wants to be left alone, you know? Anyways, yeah. Asexual. He couldn't handle being touched down there. He couldn't stand sex in general. It really freaked him out for a long time. I remember one night... Um... He and Garrett were fighting over it. Because Garrett wanted... Yeah. But he was really bad about being touched. He made my dad sleep above the covers and everything.

"And then there was my dad. Garrett. My dad's bi. He was married to my mom until she died. She died in a car accident, I think. I was really little, so I don't really remember. But my dad was always a sex-crazed maniac growing up. Bringing home girls. Bringing home guys. Bringing home whoever. Every night. Didn't matter if I had school the next morning. He was really open about it. And he was really loud, and I don't think he cared that much about me. He just wanted to bang someone every single night. And then he met Will when Will started teaching at my school. And they started dating, and my dad stopped bringing home strangers, and I really liked Will... And I was really amazed. I mean, I know not all bi people are... As sexually active as that. I know that it's just a stereotype. But um... Garrett was. He's... He's probably the reason why that stereotype was made. So I was astounded that my dad was able to be with someone like Will. Let alone marry one.

"And then Garrett started getting abusive. He didn't really do that much to me, other than yell and scream. It wasn't until the day we left that he hit me. He started beating me with his belt. But... Um... He would do stuff to Will. He pushed boundaries to the point where it was taking a serious toll on Will. And then I went out with a few friends. And... Um... I came home and he started... He started whipping me with his belt. And Will came home... And Will, like a hero, stepped in and saved me. But then Garrett got really mad... And... He grabbed Will and dragged him to the bedroom. From then on I just heard a lot of screaming from Will. A lot of screaming. A lot of begging. And then Garrett went and crashed on the couch, and I heard Will crying. It was really bad. We left after that... And... Yeah." She explained, tears starting to roll down her cheeks.

He leaned forward, handing her a box of tissues. He wasn't actually allowed to show any sort of affection in any way, not really allowed to swipe a tear away or hug her. He wasn't supposed to be doing that sort of thing. So he just leaned over and handed her the tissues, which she gratefully accepted.

"Why don't you tell me more about him, and not what happened to him?" Hannibal suggested.

"Okay... Um... He's smart. Ridiculously smart. He teaches down at the college, but really, he could be doing so much more with his life. He's brilliant. But it's really hard for him to take care of himself. Like... He's self-sufficient. He's good about keeping a schedule. But if he gets engulfed in something, like his writing or his reading, he'll... He'll shut down to everything else. He'll forget to eat, forget to sleep. He obsesses. And I have to be there to make sure that he doesn't do that. I have to make sure that he gets up and eats and does things for himself. It's kind of like my job. He puts food on the table, and I make sure he remembers to."

"You mentioned that he has autism. Does he have any sort of... Special interest?"

"Yeah, sort of. Two. Fishing. He likes fishing a lot. He makes his own lures, and he used to take me every weekend whenever my dad was working. And we'd stand and we'd fish for hours. He knew the names of all the fish he'd catch, and we'd take them home and cook them. He taught me how to cook too, but he's not very good at it. He still makes his lures, but he hasn't taken me fishing in... Not since we left. But... Um... He likes fishing a lot.

"And then there are his dogs. Um... He pretty much just picks up strays off the streets whenever he can. He loved them. He's got 7 right now. He had 9 at one point, I think. But, um... Garrett killed two of them. I'm surprised that Will didn't leave right then and there. But... Um... He stayed because of me, I think. He was waiting for the adoption process to go through so that he could take me without the court getting involved. But he's got... He's got Winston, Buster, Scott, Johnny, Bella, Rocky, and Lucy. And... Um... Yeah. He really likes dogs."

"Fascinating."

"Why are you so interested in my dad?"

His face immediately flushed with embarrassment. He supposed he had been talking a lot about this stranger, the man that he had only spoken to once over the phone. It must've seemed rather odd to Abigail, some strange man asking about her dad rather than her...

"I... I know that you are both damaged. And I was trying to evaluate the situation. Figure out whether or not I should have you both come back for a session. But this is your time, and that was wrong of me. We can talk about whatever you feel like talking about, Abigail. It's entirely up to you."

She nodded and stared down at her hands for a long moment, like she was trying to decide what to say, what to start talking about. She closed her eyes for a few seconds, inhaling and exhaling loudly, like she was still trying to calm down after the storm. And a storm it had been. She looked like everything was still trying to fall apart inside of her, and she was just barely holding it together. She looked so tired, so broken, so shattered. He knew the look all too well. He had seen the look in his own reflection. He saw it every time he passed a mirror. He had gotten good at disguising it, but it felt like the past 6 months had just been constantly like that...

He could see fragments of himself in her.

There was a damaged part of him that had been there well before the breakup. He liked to pretend like nothing was wrong, and he was just this model citizen. He came from a wealthy Danish family, he and his sister Mischa coming to America when they were still in their youth. They had learned, become, always living comfortably. Hannibal had traveled the world, getting a taste for all of the finer things in life. He was wealthy, having more money than what he knew to do with. He had everything in the world. And yet something was still shattered and broken in him. An overwhelming sense of loss that constant overtook him. And an urge to break the world, so that he didn't feel so alone.

And then there was Abigail. She didn't come from privilege. She came from abuse and a life of being alone. A father who cared more about his endless string of one-night lovers than his own daughter. A father who married a good man and then beat him. A father who really wasn't much of a father at all.

How did their two worlds collide? How did he see himself in her?

They were both shattered. They both had broken wings and destroyed lives, their only hope to put a mask on and hope that it healed the wounds underneath, which was absurd. Absolutely absurd. Abigail had lost both of her parents. So had Hannibal, when they sent him away. Abigail had suffered abuse. Hannibal had suffered the loss of his sister. And they were both shattered, both irreparably. But maybe, just maybe, he could try to piece her back together.

"Tell me about your childhood, Abigail." He whispered, leaning back in his chair and clasping his hands over his lap.

"There's not too much to tell. I grew up in the same place my whole life. Um... My dad wasn't really around much. It was usually the same routine everyday. I would wake up and go to school. School was pretty okay. I mean... I wasn't a straight A student, and I didn't have very good friends... But it wasn't any different than anyone else's experience. But everyday, after school, I would come home and do homework. Dad was usually at work. And then he'd come home at around 6, get dressed, throw a meal together for me, and then leave. I'd usually sit and watch TV or draw or something until he'd come home at around 11 with whoever. They ignored me. Most of the time they would disappear into the bedroom for the rest of the night, forgetting that I was even in the house. Sometimes they were more rowdy than that and would undress in the living room with me still sitting there. I'd eventually go to bed and try to sleep if they weren't too loud. And then I'd wake up the next morning. Usually they were still asleep. If they weren't, they'd either be arguing, or going another morning round. There have been a few decent people that he brought home and they'd wake up before Dad and they'd make breakfast and be nice to me. Most of the time they forgot I was even there. And I never saw the same people twice until Will... So... Yeah. It'd just be the same thing everyday." She explained.

"And that changed for you, correct?"

"Yeah. When I was fourteen, my freshman year, I started Will's journalism class for my elective. And he noticed me falling asleep in class all the time, because my dad decided to

throw the idea of being quiet out the window and I could never sleep. And my grades were slipping I guess. So he called in a parent-teacher conference, which made Dad really angry at first. But Dad and Will started talking, and I guess they both had fishing in common. And they really hit it off. Or, at least, I thought they did.

"And then Dad invited Will on a fishing trip, and Will decided to go. And Dad stopped bringing home people every single night. And they started dating. And by that summer they were engaged. And my dad didn't want to have sex all the time. He wasn't some animal anymore. And he got nicer too. And then Will moved in with us, which was kind of weird, but also kind of cool. And it was pretty awesome for a long time. Dad was happy, Will was happy for the most part. There was a lot of trouble at first because he couldn't get adjusted. He apparently lived with his parents until he moved in with us. He couldn't be trusted alone or something. He forgets to eat and stuff. Forgets to do stuff. Gets too caught up. And... Yeah. So he'd never lived with anyone else before us. But after awhile, I think he started getting used to it. And it was great until right after my 16th birthday. It was awesome. But..."

"Was that when he started getting abusive?"

"Yeah. It started with him screaming at us. And he wouldn't get Will his meds, which made Will have anxiety attacks worse than he already did. And he stopped letting me leave the house other than for school. And he started making Will touch him, and he started touching Will, and it was so awful because Will was so broken..."

"I see. You don't have to tell me any more than what you want to."

"I know. It's okay. I'm okay."

She probably wasn't as okay as she was trying to make it out to be. She was sitting in the chair, curled up so tightly that it looked like she could break. Her chin rested on her knees, her hands clasped together so tightly that her knuckles were as white as the cold December clouds. The dreary light that drifted in through the window made her already-pale skin look even paler, making the steady stream of tears stand out more and more... She looked like a lot of things. Fragile. Broken. Tired. But okay was not one of them.

"Just checking. I don't want you to have another anxiety attack, Abigail. It's my job to make sure that your mind is in tact, and to keep it from shattering again. Is your mind in tact? Are you okay? Do you want to stop?" He queried.

"I wouldn't go as far as to say in tact, but yeah. I'm fine."

"I don't doubt you. Why don't you tell me about what's happened since you left? You don't have to get into all the gory details of what happened to you if they're going to cause you to panic again. You can if you wish, but don't feel obligated in any way to tell me everything."

"Okay... Yeah. I... I'll... Yeah. We left about six months ago. We moved to an apartment in the city. I started going to a new school, which was sort of awful because I didn't know anybody. And... We've just been trying to make a new routine for Will to follow, since that's what he needs. And I feel like I kind of need it too, you know? I mean... After everything, I just need

some stability. So that's pretty much where we are right now. Not too terribly interesting. We're just trying to rebuild what we had, just without my dad as a factor."

"I understand."

"Yeah."

There was a long silence, the two of them just sitting there, neither sure of what to say or do at this point. They were just silently sitting, and somehow, it was okay. Neither felt pressured to talk, to say a word. They'd not known each other for long, but it felt comfortable in the silence. Like they were okay without words.

"Do you ever think about suicide, Abigail?" He inquired.

"No." She answered bluntly.

"Have you ever hurt yourself in the past?"

"No."

"Do you feel depressed?"

"Not really. I mean, things aren't great. But I wouldn't call it depression."

"Have you ever had an anxiety attack before?"

"No. Not really."

"Okay. I'm mandated to ask those questions. I'm sorry if they're... Not what you need. Tell me about what brought you to me."

"I... I saw my dad. I was driving and I thought I saw him. I mean... I think I was imagining it, but I swear... I thought it was him. And... Yeah. I was driving and I ran a red light because I was looking for him and I started panicking... And I almost got hit. I just drove home as fast as I could and... I don't really remember much after that. I remember Will touching me. I remember screaming the second that he did... It was..."

"You have a severe anxiety attack, Abigail. It was nothing that you need to be ashamed of. Many of us will have them in our lifetimes. It's not something you should feel shame over. It's just something that happens. Something that we just need to try and move past. And I will help you, if you allow me."

She paused and looked down at her hand, letting herself unfurl. She put her legs down, stopped holding her hands together so tightly, and wiped away the tears. She exhaled slowly, finally reaching up and swiping the tears from her face. She relaxed a bit, leaning back and closing her eyes.

"I want you to help me."

He smiled, letting the smile creep over his lips. He scooted forward in his own seat, uncrossing his legs and leaning over to her. His hands reached out and grabbed hers, doing something that was probably unorthodox and not allowed. He wasn't allowed to show displays of affection. It was against the rules of his practice. But at that moment, he didn't care.

"I will gladly help you, Abigail Hobbs."

Nostalgia

His hands beat against the steering wheel until they were red and sore, aching right down to the bones. His screams had probably alarmed the neighbors, and he probably wasn't making a lot of people very happy, but he was angry. He was so angry with himself. He had tried so hard to be a good father, but his daughter was falling apart and he hadn't even noticed it. And he couldn't even bring himself to walk her in to the person who could help her when her own father couldn't. He was such a failure. Failure, failure, failure.

His eyes were blurry now as he rested his forehead against the steering wheel, trying to block out the world. He was so mad. He hated himself. He wanted to fold up and disappear into the fabric of space and time, ceasing to exist. Maybe, if he had never existed, Abigail would still be with Garrett, who wasn't exactly caring but not hurting her. He was well aware of how things had been before he stumbled into their lives. He brought home people all the time, every single night. And Abigail was doing fine. A little troubled, but nothing too bad. Maybe if he had never existed, things would be the same way and she'd go onto college and she'd do just fine in life. But because of him, he'd turned her father into an abuser...

"He wants to see me again on the 7th." Abigail spoke, climbing into the passenger's seat, causing him to jump.

"Yeah. Yeah, okay." He replied, burying his face in his hands and turning to key, turning to pull out of the parking lot. He needed to get home, get back onto a schedule.

He pulled out of the driveway, knuckles starting to relax. The surroundings weren't as chaotic. He was going to be alright. He was okay. He was okay. He inhaled, exhaled, inhaled, exhaled... He was going to be alright. He wasn't going to freak out. He was going to make it through today, and things would get back to schedule, and he wouldn't overload, and everything was going to be fine.

"How was it?" He inquired.

"Good. We talked about my childhood, mostly. Asked a lot of weird questions. Some of them were about you. And... That was pretty much it. Fun stuff." She replied.

She always got sarcastic over things that she didn't want to admit to. She didn't want to admit that it was helpful. Or that she liked her therapist. She didn't want to admit to any of it. Not that he could blame her. She had lived normally for so long, no mental issues, and now... Now she was panicking and nearly crashing her car.

"You okay?" He inquired.

"Yeah. I'm alright now. I calmed down. I'm fine." She replied softly, eyes drifting to her hands as he pulled out onto the road.

"Do you want to talk about it? I mean, I know I was... I wasn't so great when I went about handling that. I mean, I've had panic attacks but I have no idea how to help anyone through it.

I don't even know what to do to help myself through it. I just wait it out. But... I'm sorry, Abigail. Do you want to talk to me about it? I want to try and be a better dad."

"Firstly, you don't need to be a better dad. You're quite literally the best dad I've ever had. My last one was a fucking prick, obviously. You're doing all that you can. And it's okay. You're doing great. One anxiety attack is not your fault. It was all his. So calm down. You don't need to be a better dad. You're awesome. Seriously. I don't think Garrett ever paid this much attention to me."

He just nodded, keeping his hands on the wheel, smiling a bit. "Thank you." He whispered.

"It's the truth, Will. You're awesome at being a dad. Seriously. Secondly, no. I'd rather forget the whole thing. I don't want to think about him. I got everything out that I wanted to say when I was with Dr. Lecter. I don't need to burden you with it. You're already tired. You don't need me to say more about it and make you feel like crap. No. I just want to get home and I want to do what we planned. That's it."

Will just smiled.

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They were happy. They were allowed to be happy. Nothing wrong with happiness. Especially when they had been so sorely deprived of it for almost a year.

Jingle Bells swing

"Do you want some hot chocolate?" He inquired, stepping back as they finished up.

And Jingle Bells ring

"Yep." She replied, sitting back down on the couch, admiring their work.

Snowing and blowing up bushels of fun

Will slipped into the kitchen quickly with a smile on his face. He was always one for repetition, but he was a sucker for tradition. He wanted to start this as a tradition, just the two of them. They didn't need anyone else. Maybe someday someone would enter Abigail's life and they'd have an edition to the family. Maybe one day she would get married and have kids. He'd get to watch her grow up and become a wonderful, beautiful mother. He'd get to watch her be happier than he could ever be. And maybe one day they'd have a big, happy family. But until then, Will was perfectly content with just him and Abigail. He didn't need anyone else. He didn't need Garrett Jacob Hobbs. He didn't need a man. He didn't need someone to hold him. He didn't need anyone but Abigail.

Now the Jingle Hop has begun

He stirred the hot chocolate for a minute and finally walked back in, carrying two mugs of it. It wasn't anything special, no secret ingredients or anything. It was just Swiss Miss in some hot water. But it was most certainly delicious. He handed one to Abigail and took the other for himself, curling up on the couch next to her as she tucked herself beneath his arm, nestling into his chest. It was a familiar touch, and it was perhaps the only touch that didn't make him horribly uncomfortable.

Jingle Bell

"Thanks, Will." She whispered, closing her eyes and taking a sip.

Jingle Bell

"You're welcome, Abigail."

Jingle Bell rock

It was just the two of them, sitting next to the fire as they stared at the Christmas tree. It was so close to the reality that he had lived as a child. He hadn't had a decent Christmas in a long time. Last Christmas ended in a fight with Garrett over what he called "Christmas sex" when he turned up naked in their bed, expecting a brutal round of it. But Will ran out of the house after that, refusing to come back until break was over. It was scarring. It ruined Christmas for all three of them. There had been so many fights like that...

Jingle Bells chime in Jingle Bell time

Now it was a happier time. It was just him and Abigail, sitting in the living room, sipping hot chocolate next to the fire with an old Christmas record playing. It couldn't be more serene. It was something out of those cheesy holiday movies. But instead of some needless hetero relationship, it was truly about family. Even if it was a small family, even if it was a broken family... It was about family. A happy family.

Dancing and prancing in Jingle Bell Square

"Are you happy with me, Abigail?" He inquired softly.

In the frosty air.

"Dad, listen to me. Okay? I lived with a maniac my entire life. He didn't give a crap about what happened to me. He never told me he loved me. I'm 90% certain that he'd be happier if I had just died, or had never been born in the first place. I never even knew my mom. All I had was Garrett Jacob Hobbs and his endless string of lovers. And then you came in and you take care of me. You care about me. You sacrifice so much for me. I know how much you struggle sometimes, and I think that you're amazing. You tell me if I'm happy here."

What a bright time, it's the right time

"So you don't... Regret... You don't regret the fact that I came into your life? I mean, I know I screwed things up a lot. And it caused you some damage, obviously... You don't wish that you could've just gone on the way things were?"

To rock the night away

"Never. I'm so glad I met you, Will."

Jingle bell time is a swell time

"I'm glad I met you too, Abigail."

To go gliding in a one-horse sleigh

"Well, don't pretend that I didn't screw up your life too. If it weren't for me, you would've never met my dad. None of that crap would've ever happened to you. You'd be living a perfectly happy life. He wouldn't have hurt you in the way that he did. He hurt you, Will. And I see it every single day. You know that he did. Do you not regret meeting me?"

Giddy-up jingle horse, pick up your feet

"Not for a second. My life was going nowhere. I lived with my parents for years after I graduated. I wasn't going anywhere. I didn't know how to live by myself, or even with someone other than who I was used to. And then you came and you rocked my world. You changed everything. You made everything better. You gave me something to live for. I put you before anyone else, Abigail. Everything that happened to me was worth it in the end. Because now I have you."

Jingle around the clock

She smiled down at the floor as she sat her drink down. And then she turned and she hugged him tighter than he had ever been hugged. He smiled, a little bit startled, and wrapped his arms around his daughter. This was something that he could get used to. She was something he could get used to. She was his whole world now.

Mix and a-mingle in the jingling feet

"I love you, dad."

That's the jingle bell rock

"I love you too.

Christmas Lights and One Night Stands

"Hello, this is Bedelia du Maurier, I'm not available to answer the phone right now, please leave a message."

Her voice was always so formal. Even when they weren't horribly serious, even when they were dancing or making jokes or cooking together or doing trivial things, her voice always remained serious and formal. Like she had seen too much, like she was wearing a mask made of stone. Which, he supposed, wasn't too terribly far from accurate. She had been hurt before. She had been broken down. She was raped by her father when she was 16. She lived in an abusive home. She knew what it was like to be in pain. And maybe that was why she shielded herself and put on a mask of stone.

"Hi, Bedelia. It's Hannibal. Just calling to wish you a merry Christmas, and I pray that you're having a good one... Okay, that's all." He stuttered, not as smooth-talking as he had once been.

It was Christmas Eve, and Hannibal Lecter was alone.

Once upon a time, he would've been throwing elaborate parties for people he didn't even like that much. Normally, he would've slaved all day in his kitchen for a party that lasted until midnight, and everyone would be festive and most of them would be rich and stuck-up but it meant that he didn't have to spend it alone. And then, for the past 2 years, he'd spent his Christmases with Bedelia. They would sit by the fire and talk about life and get all nostalgic about things they had done as children. And then, instead of tying her up and whipping her and doing things to her that made her scream, like he usually did, he would lay her down on the bed and they would be like normal people. They'd take things slow rather than hot and heavy. It was normal. And it was nice. And then they'd wake up, he'd make breakfast, play Christmas carols on the harpsichord... They'd exchange gifts... It was the one day of the year when things weren't dripping with tension and intensity. It was truly just a day of happiness and nostalgia.

And now he was alone.

He was spending Christmas Eve alone. There would be no one next to him in bed tonight. He'd be waking up to an empty apartment. He hadn't bought any Christmas presents this year. He'd be playing the harpsichord to nothing but empty air. He was spending Christmas Eve completely and utterly alone.

He sat at the bench of his harpsichord, fingers trailing over the keys.... Normally, he'd be playing some catchy Christmas tune, fingers striking the keys with a surprising amount of joy. But he just wasn't feeling it tonight. He hadn't felt joyful or cheerful since Bedelia left him. He knew that he should've been okay. He knew that he didn't need anybody else. He could survive without other people. But it hurt him to be alone. The silence was deafening. The fact that he didn't have anybody there to console him....

He was done with being alone.

He stood up quickly, the bench scratching against the floor with a deafening screech. He gritted his teeth for a moment as he walked toward the phone that sat on the kitchen counter. He was stooping lower than he had ever gone before, but he was a little drunk and he was lonely. Unbearably lonely. He needed someone something, whatever it took. He needed someone to hold onto. He had never stooped so low as to beg, which he knew he was going to have to do...

But screw it. It's Christmas.

"Alana Bloom." She greeted as she picked up the phone.

"Dr. Bloom."

"May I ask who's calling?"

"It's Dr. Hannibal Lecter. We met while you were still attending school."

There was a pause. There was a sound of something being sat down, and then a few footsteps. A whispered "who is it" and a reply with "an old friend." More footsteps. Finally, after a few moments, he heard her sit down and exhale. She wasn't living alone, like he had previously thought. It probably was going to make this request a lot more awkward, but he couldn't back out now. Who knew? Maybe it was just family coming home for the holidays. Maybe she would still come over. Because he really didn't want to spend the night alone.

"Hey, hi. Long time, no see." She replied, a little nervously.

"How're you? How've you been?" He replied, sitting himself down on the couch.

"I've been good. Great, actually. How're you?"

"Um, not bad. Not too bad."

"Practice still doing well?"

"Phenomenally, yes. How about yours?"

"I'm actually not working right now. I married rich, so we're not really in need of anything. Two kids. I'm going to take it back up once the boys are in high school, I think."

"Oh, really? Your husband must be very lucky."

"Yeah, she is."

"Oh."

There was a pause as Hannibal grimaced in embarrassment at his own heteronormativity. He himself was bisexual, but still expected the people he slept with to either be straight or gay. It was a flaw imposed upon him by society that he was trying to break, but he still slipped up on occasion, and he oftentimes found himself embarrassed when he did.

"So, um... Married." He stammered.

"Married." She replied.

"I guess that means you coming over for old time's sake is out of the question."

"That depends. Are we talking about the studying part or the more interesting part?"

"Well, I wasn't talking about all of the studying we used to do."

"Oh... So we are talking about the more interesting bits. Someone's lonely on Christmas Eve."

His face flushed. She always made him vulnerable. Even when they were in college, when he was a guest speaker and she was a student who liked to imagine him with his clothes off, he was vulnerable. She was the only person who he had let be dominant over him. She would chain him up and do her business, hurt him in ways that made him long for more. He was always a dominant before her, but she was... Different.

He could still remember the first time that they had done anything. He'd been speaking in her class for awhile, lecturing when her normal teacher was too hungover to work. And then, after about two weeks of teaching every couple of days, she came up to him. She went over and locked the door, and claimed that it was for some extra credit. And from then to graduation, they had something of a scandalous affair. And it was one of the best partnerships he'd ever had, to be completely honest. But she got a real boyfriend after graduation, and she broke everything off. They hadn't spoken since.

"I feel you. Before I found Margot, I spent many Christmas Eve's alone. I'll be over in twenty minutes. Let me tuck the boys in and say bye to Margot. Should I bring handcuffs, or do you still have yours?"

"Wait, what?"

"Well, Margot and I have... An arrangement. It's kind of an open relationship. It's basically just for us to keep our old friends with benefits so we can, you know... Benefit. She's very persuasive that way. But I get in on it too, and while I don't exercise that right as liberally as she does, I'm still game. We're putting the boys to bed early, so I'll be over in a few minutes."

"Are you sure?"

"Yeah, Margot's better at wrapping presents anyways. Besides, she left me home alone on Halloween for some kinky crap with her late brother's old financial adviser. I had to take them trick-or-treating alone, and then deal with the sugar high. Yeah, she owes me."

"I mean, I don't want to intrude. I don't want to interrupt your family time..."

"No, it's cool. So are we doing normal stuff, or are we going kinky? Because I need an answer on the handcuffs thing."

"I... I still have some."

"Okay, let me tuck the boys in and tell Margot. I'll be over in fifteen minutes. Same place?"

"Same place."

"Okay. Oh, and Hannibal?"

"Alana?"

"I don't want a speck of clothing on you when I get there."

The line went dead.

He hung up quickly, and some spark of excitement filled him again, for the first time in a long, long time. He let a smile peek over his lips as he sat the phone down. He bolted for the bedroom, shrugged off his clothes, and waited.

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"Can't you at least let me make you breakfast?" He groaned, sitting up.

"It's four in the morning." She laughed, strapping on her boots.

"So?"

She shook her head and shrugged her trenchcoat back on. She was probably going to go home and kiss her wife, lay down next to the woman that she laid down next to every night. See her face the next morning, like she always did. He longed for something like that. He wanted to lay down next to a woman, or a man, and wake up to those same eyes over and over. He wanted to fall in love with someone so completely, so fully...

"I need to get home, Hannibal. I have a wife. I have kids. I have a life. Just because I came here doesn't mean I can stay." She replied, standing at the door, ready to leave now.

"I... I just... I'm alone, Alana. And I know that I can't keep you from your family, your children, your wife. I can't keep you from them. But I don't want to be alone. And usually being alone is okay. Loneliness is my protection. Alone protects me. But... I don't know... It's... It's Christmas, Alana. And I'm alone. I have no one left. And I have no one to even spend Christmas with." He whispered, absolutely pitiful. God, he hated being so desperate.

She stared at him with pity in her eyes. He sat up, completely nude, completely vulnerable. He didn't bother to try and cover himself up. There wasn't any reason. She had seen every inch of him, all strung up and acting like some sort of mewling quim as she took the reigns, something no one else was allowed to do. He just sat there, staring back at her, hoping and praying that maybe, just maybe, she would stay for a few more hours. Maybe she would let him cook for her like he did so long ago. Maybe she would stay with him, just for a little while, just so that he could not be alone all day long.

"Merry Christmas, Hannibal." She whispered.

And she walked away. He heard her let herself out, the door slamming shut behind her. He sat there for a long time, completely vulnerable, completely alone...

He was so pathetic.

He let her have all of him. He let her have his body, his mind, his control. He let her take the reigns that night, let her do whatever she pleased to him. He never let anyone else do that, but she was allowed. She was allowed to dominate him as he submitted to her every whim, letting her play God, letting her hurt him and please him all at once. And now she was leaving. He gave up everything that night, and now she was just walking away.

It wasn't her fault. He knew what he was getting into when he realized that she was married. But now... She had to leave. Their night ended and now there was nothing left. They'd probably not talk again for another 10 years, until he was so desperately lonely that he needed her again...

God, he was so weak. So vulnerable. So pathetic. He was nothing more than a mewling quim, begging for attention and love, when there was none left for him. Why would anyone love

him, anyways? Why would anyone truly love him? He had money, he had skills, he had services he could give. But why would anyone love him? The man who was alone and needy for someone. He needed someone to love, as much as he didn't want to admit it. He needed a family, no matter how small.

And Alana had that family. She had a wife and kids. She had a family. She had Margot and her boys. She had a life outside of work. She had things to live for. He didn't anymore. He didn't have anyone. He had "friends" and colleagues who liked him for his money. But he didn't have anyone genuine. He had no one who loved him for who he was, and he couldn't get mad at Alana for having that.

"Merry Christmas, Alana." He whispered, burying his face into his knees.

I Found God...

Will Graham was doing better.

Christmas came and went quickly. He got a few gifts from Abigail, a new fishing rod and a few toys for the dogs. He gave a few gifts to Abigail, including a locket and his wedding ring, a wedding ring that had once belonged to her mother but had been fitted to fit his finger. It had been something that he and Garrett had come up with when they got married. A strange sentiment of Garrett's, a sentiment that never really bothered Will. He figured that it would hold better memories for Abigail than it ever did for him. He got her a Polaroid camera and his old record player too, along with a few old records. Most of it was cheap, free even. But it was all that he could afford.

And today was the day.

They'd been back on a schedule. No more panic attacks. No more issues. After Christmas, they got back on a schedule. A good schedule. A schedule that let them stay focused on the present, rather than panicking about the past. School had started back up on Monday, and Will was teaching again... They were doing better. Both of them were doing better.

Abigail had her first official appointment with Dr. Lecter that afternoon. There had been a few more phone calls between him and the doctor, brief ones, only consisting of a few exchanged words, all about Abigail and appointments. He sounded... Nice. He had a Danish accent, but it was easy to understand what he was saying. You could hear his smile in his voice whenever Will made a quick, passing joke. It sounded like a nice smile. He sounded intelligent, using long words that Will had a great appreciation for. He sounded like a true gentleman... And to be completely honest, Will was dying to meet him.

It seemed completely inappropriate. He couldn't really develop a relationship with his daughter's therapist. He didn't even want to. He didn't want to meet another man, fall hopelessly in love, only to have him change. He didn't want to be touched again. He didn't want anyone to touch him like that ever again. He was so afraid of being hurt...

But there was something attractive about him. Like some invisible force was pulling them closer together. There was something about him that made Will want to somehow get closer to him, to get to know him. It was scary, because he felt similar things when he first met Garrett Jacob Hobbs. Things had started out wonderfully. Talking on the phone all the time, late night serenades, staying the night together and doing nothing but watching Netflix. It was wonderful, really. It was romantic. But then it all changed, and he knew that he couldn't trust someone again. But there was just something alluring about Dr. Lecter... And Will didn't even know what he looked like... But when he spoke on the phone, there was just something so calming and alluring, something he hadn't noticed the first time they spoke but had since come to savor.

And today was the day.

He sat on his desk, the slideshow turning to black as the bell rang and his students filed out of the classroom quickly. Last class of the day. As much as he enjoyed teaching, he really was excited to meet the mysterious Dr. Lecter. It was something that he rarely experienced, excitement to meet another human being. He wasn't much for other people, and he struggled to talk to them. He didn't like many other people. But Hannibal Lecter seemed... Nice. Different. Alluring.

"Ready?" She called.

Abigail stood at the now-empty doorway. She wore a t-shirt and jeans, just what she had been wearing to school. She came straight after school to pick him up. He always let her just drop him off at the college and drive herself to school. His classes ran later than hers anyways, so it only made sense. She was something that he always got to see when he worked, and it was a good way to end the day. He loved his daughter more than anyone or anything, and seeing her after work was something of a stress-reliever. Talking at a group of kids wasn't hard, because he wasn't talking to or with them. Just at them. But he had to cooperate with the other teachers, play nice, actually have manners... And that was not something that he was overly fond of.

"Yep. Just a second." He replied, jumping off of the desk and grabbing his briefcase. It didn't contain much. Just his laptop and a few papers that he still needed to grade. He planned on grading them while he waited for Abigail to finish with Dr. Lecter. Just something to do. He wasn't so good with just sitting still while he waited for things. His hands always had to be busy without exception. He had to be doing something. So if it was something as boring as grading papers, so be it.

He grabbed his things and headed toward her, his hand resting gently on her back as he led them out of the college. Passing a few of his colleagues, including Beverly Katz and Jack Crawford. He didn't really consider any of them friends, but they were friendly enough. It was just... Hard. Hard to be friendly, hard to be nice. But, then again, it was hard to be any of those things with anybody.

They hurried out into the cold, darting to the car. Abigail had parked close, which was fortunate. He hated when she had to park far away, because it was always cold here. They hurried to the car, feet sliding over the icy pavement, toes curled inside of their shoes and eyes watery from the freezing wind. When they got to the car, Will greeted the warmth, embracing it. It hadn't been off long enough for it to get cold again, which he was grateful for. Had his class run long, he'd have to deal with the cold, and waiting for the car to warm up again.

Abigail sat in the driver's seat, taking the wheel, which he was also grateful for. Driving was overwhelming, especially in the winter months. It was so much easier in the warm months, but Abigail was a good driver. Her father had taught her, one of the only things that he'd done right when he raised her. She told him that it was one of the only things that they'd ever done together. She never really saw him much growing up. He was always hidden away in the bedroom, having sex with random strangers...

That in itself should've been a warning sign that things weren't going to work out. Will was asexual, couldn't handle sex. It was too much for him. But Garrett was obsessed with it. He

never told Abigail, but Will had caught Garrett cheating several times, but never said anything to anyone because he figured that it was his own fault. It was his own fault that he had cheated, because Will couldn't give him what he wanted. Will couldn't just let him have his fun. Will wasn't enough for him. So he never said anything...

She shook off the thoughts and let Abigail drive. She drove quickly through the streets, which were pretty free of traffic compared to other days. It was at what could typically be considered rush hour, but the streets were icy and people were staying in. She hurried well enough, though not quite as quickly as he would've liked. To be honest, he would've preferred going faster because he hated riding in cars, but...

It only took about 10 minutes to get there. It was a big city, but a small area. Everything was bunched together, nothing being too far away from each other. It was a good place to live, to be honest. Loud, noisy, harsh... But quick.

"You okay coming in today?" She inquired, parking the car.

"Yes. Yeah. Yes. Of course." He replied, nodding vigorously.

"You certain?"

"Yes. I am one hundred percent. I'm good today."

Abigail smiled and reached over, her hand patting his knee. Her touch was gentle enough, and though it still wasn't comfortable. He wasn't a fan of touching very often, but he could take it from her. He could take it today.

He inhaled sharply and stepped out of the car. The icy wind blew against him sharply, stinging his eyes and his body, causing his body to shake and his eyes to water. Biting down on his bottom lip, he shrugged his coat tightly around him, trying to keep the cold away, but it didn't do much to keep out the cold. Abigail walked around the front of the car, meeting him halfway. Her gloved hand found his, and his fingers clasped over hers.

"Ready?" He whispered.

"Yep." She replied, giving a short, quick nod.

They inhaled in unison, turning to the glass doors. A break in routine, someone new in their lives. Why it was stressful, he wasn't sure. It was something that was supposed to relieve stress. Therapy was invented to relieve stress, to relieve the pain and struggles of everyday life. And yet, there they were, contemplating whether or not they should walk through the doors, wondering if something was going to change, and what was going to change. Change was something that he wasn't good with, something he wasn't comfortable with. Change was bad, change was hard. But therapy was about change.

Giving her hand a squeeze, they hurried into the building, hurrying out of the cold. The warmth was inviting, and something smelled sweet, like someone was baking. It brought him back to old times, back to the days when things were simpler. Things had always been hard, he had always been depressed. But things were easier. It was before he had learned that he

was gay. It was before he had learned how hard his asexuality was to work around when you craved a romantic relationship. It was before he had been raped. It was before he had been abused.

It smelled like home.

It smelled like the way his house smelled everyday after school, coming home to find sweets that his mother had made, sweets that Will took years to eat, because the texture was too overwhelming. It took him ages to eat anything other than jello or yogurt, took him well into his adult life to eat anything else. But the smell had always been something familiar. It smelled like his home. It smelled like he was there and he was there for good. It smelled like nostalgia. It smelled like a new love. It smelled like safety.

"Nothing special today, unfortunately. Haven't had time to go to the store and buy new ingredients. Just cookies." A new, familiar voice announced.

Will jumped, startled. His heart skipped a beat as he turned. He was still standing in the doorway, so it took him a moment to find the source of the voice. He turned and found a man, tall and dark and mysterious, standing in the corner. Of course, it was difficult to look tall and dark and mysterious while holding a tray of cookies with an apron tied around your waist, but somehow, he managed to look like that, and so much more.

His hair was a strange color, kind of silvery. He looked to be in his late 40s, a good 10 years older than Will, easily. His eyes were beautifully brown, absolutely stunning, metallic looking in the low lighting. He had scars lining his cheeks, but he was alluring nonetheless. His hair flopped over his forehead, his eyes dark and face cast with shadows. Underneath his apron was a plain white shirt with the collar popped up, somehow adding to the air of mystery...

Good. God.

Will stared for a long moment as he sat down the tray on the counter. It looked like a secretary's desk, not a counter for food, but to him it appeared to be one and the same. Will began to wonder if this was more than just a place of business, and if this was where he lived. It was undoubtedly large enough for him, the place being a good 5 or 6 stories. All he really needed was one for his practice, and he could have the rest for his own personal reasons...

He sat down the tray and ripped off the apron, draping it over a plush leather couch. Will just stared, intimidated and attracted to him all at once. It was purely aesthetic, not feeling any desire for sex. But he definitely felt aesthetic attraction there. He was... Beautiful, in ways. He was like looking at a work of art. He was stunning, and magnificent, and intense, and dark, and mysterious, and beautiful. God, he was so strangely beautiful, and Will didn't want to take his eyes off of him.

He walked slowly, power in his stride. He walked with power and confidence, a small smile peeking over his lips. He made eye-contact, and for the first time in what felt like an eternity, Will was okay holding it. He hurried over, hand outstretched. At first, he thought that maybe that hand was meant for Abigail. Abigail had met him before, after all. But his hand was outstretched for Will, and he froze for just a moment before finally taking it.

His handshake was strong, squeezing his hand tightly. Will gulped down hard, not sure whether he liked his touch or not. Touch was scary for him, whether it was someone he knew or a stranger. It didn't matter who it was or how it was. It was just uncomfortable. But, for the first time, he was pretty sure that it was okay. His touch was strong and confident. His eyes portrayed years and years of wisdom. He was... Intense. Intelligent...

"You must be William Graham. Dr. Hannibal Lecter. Nice to meet you."

On the Corner of First and Amistad

Will Graham was just as stunning as he had expected.

He had been thinking a lot about William Graham ever since the therapy appointment had been scheduled. They'd talked on the phone a few more times, and each time Hannibal became more and more lovesick. He wasn't sure why, but there was just this natural attraction toward him. It wasn't inherently sexual at all, but it was on a more emotional level somehow. He wasn't sure why, considering that he hardly even knew the man... But there was something inside of the two of them that was bringing them together. He didn't know how... But it was there. And it was real. It was the most real thing that he had ever felt.

At first glance, he was a kid. Scrawny. Skinny. Slumped over and shying away. At first he looked peaceful, his eyelids drooping and his entire body swaying just a bit, like the wind was rocking him, the ocean washing over him and sweeping him in its waves. His dark hair hung in curls over his forehead, cascading over his head and down into his eyes. His eyes were hidden, but from the flashes of color that he did see, he could tell that they were this brilliant blue, like the sky and the sea and the entirety of the universe were caught in them. He was stunning in ways that weren't conventional. His beauty acted quietly. It was a beauty that didn't make a big deal of itself. It was like a sunset, or the night sky, familiar and stunning. He was simple. And beautiful.

Will's eyes went wide the moment that his eyes found Hannibal's, eye-contact being made and not being broken. He didn't say much. Just spoke. But he still jumped, just at the sound of his voice. His eyelids bolted up, no longer drooping, his body now rigid instead of swaying. It wasn't until then that he realized that he looked less like a kid and more like a man. His muscles were strong. Not huge, but sculpted. The scruff on his face seemed masculine, real. He was so... So...

He went into auto-pilot, hardly even aware of the words that he spoke. They were words, trained to fall off of his tongue, trained into instinct. He knew that he needed to pay attention, but as he stared at the boy in front of him... He couldn't focus. There was something that Will Graham did to him just by looking at him... It was this sense of longing, a sense of fulfillment, a sense of hunger, a sense of nourishment. It was every feeling all at once. How could he focus?

His eyes scanned over Will as he held out a hand for him. He focused on the little details of him, studying him over, trying to memorize every part of him. His hair was a little bit frizzy, like he hadn't brushed it in a couple of days. He wore a black button-down shirt with a black tie to match underneath his trench-coat. He wore slacks as well, and a pair of sensible shoes. Nothing terribly fancy, but definitely nice. Work appropriate. Something told him that he just came from work. Abigail said he worked as a teacher, but something told him that he was a college teacher. He was... Handsome. Stunning.

His hand squeezed a little too tight around Will's, but he was so distracted by those big, blue eyes... Will's hand was stiff in his, hardly wrapped back around his. Will was staring back up

into the eyes of Hannibal Lecter, which surprised him. Abigail had mentioned that he had autism, which was something that definitely stood out, among the asexuality. People with autism had a tendency to not look anyone in the eye... But he stared him right in the eye, looking mesmerized, eyes darting up and down his face but always returning back to his eyes...

"You must be William Graham. Dr. Hannibal Lecter. Nice to meet you." He greeted.

Awkwardness filled him for a moment, wondering if he'd screwed up. Which was entirely possible. William. Why did he call him William? He'd been known as Will. Just Will. Why did he say William? He was used to being around high class people, who typically went by their long, pretentious name. He himself was the owner of a pretentious name. Hannibal. What kind of name was Hannibal? But he called him William... It was ridiculous. He sounded pretentious now...

"Will Graham. Nice to meet you." Will replied quickly before looking down at the ground, taking his hand back quickly.

He stared for a long time, just watching his movements for a few moments. He knew that he needed to be paying attention to Abigail, his actual patient, but he was just so... He was mesmerized by William Graham. And he wanted more. He wanted to know more. Wanted to see more. Wanted to say more.

"Can I... Get you any refreshments? I don't have a lot right now. We can do a wine and cheese, however, it's required by law that the wine stay between you and I, Mr. Graham. I have wine, champagne... Sparkling water for you, Ms. Hobbs." He inquired, snapping out of it and turning back to Abigail.

"I'll take champagne." Will replied, fiddling with his jacket.

"Water's fine." Abigail replied with a small, soft smile.

Hannibal gave a quick smile and dashed back to the kitchen, not waiting a second. He wasn't sure why, but he didn't want to miss a second of time that could be spent with William Graham. He was so strangely mesmerizing, so captivating, so endlessly fascinating. He didn't know why he was so fascinating, either. He was just standing there, saying very little, hardly looking up... But what he had heard about him was so captivating. His autism, his asexuality, the abuse he'd survived... He seemed so strong, and it was something that Hannibal was desperately longing to get to know.

He grabbed a bottle of champagne and a small bottle of sparkling water. Nothing special. He grabbed a few glasses for himself and William and Abigail, fingers tangled over glass to hold them all in one hand. This wasn't going to be his typical session. He rarely worked with minors, so talking with parents wasn't something that he was used to... But it really didn't matter as he skidded into the room, hurrying back. He didn't want to seem unprofessional, but he wanted to be there. He wanted to get to know Will. And maybe it was a stupid crush or maybe he was just hopelessly desperate after that awful Christmas one night stand...

He hurried back into the room. Will was slouched again, his eyes darting down at the floor. He didn't look as peaceful as he did before. He looked nervous now, looking shaky and uneasy. He was fidgeting with the zipper, stimming. It was an autism thing. Hannibal had dealt with high-functioning autistic patients before, and he knew how they needed to fidget with things, or stim. He supposed that Will was no different. Not that it bothered him at all. As he walked back toward him, he honestly found it kind of... Cute.

Abigail was looking around, looking a bit more relaxed than Will. He'd hardly noticed her since they walked in, but she looked a lot better than what she looked like the last time she came. Her dark hair was tied back in a braid, cascading down her left shoulder. She had big blue eyes, eyes that weren't bloodshot or wet with tears today. She was pale, thin as a rod, just like Will. If Hannibal hadn't known better, he would've thought that Will was her biological father.

"Shall we?" Hannibal suggested, gesturing to the couch.

Will nodded slightly and followed him over, sitting down on the couch. He sat at the very edge, obviously uncomfortable. Abigail settled in next to him, seeming much more relaxed. He supposed that Abigail was back to her normal self, and while she may still need help, she wasn't the one who was in bad shape today. She seemed okay. She was someone completely different from the sobbing girl he'd heard on the telephone. She seemed much better. William, however...

Hannibal took a glass and popped open the bottle quickly, expertly. It foamed at the top, a bit streaming over onto his fingers with familiarity, bringing him back to the all of those New Years Eve parties and those days when life was worth living... Quickly pouring it into his glass and then William's, he handed over to the father of his patient. He sat down the now half-empty bottle of champagne on the coffee table and took the bottle of sparkling water. Nothing overly fancy, but it was good enough. Abigail was still underage, so she couldn't drink the champagne, at least not while on professional terms. He poured the glass as her father sniffed quickly at the champagne, as if trying to decide whether or not it was safe to drink. As he poured, Hannibal's eyes followed Will, watching and waiting...

He handed Abigail her drink and took up his own, raising it to his lips and taking a sip of the golden starlight. Ever since he was 16 and got his first sip of the stuff, he'd thought of it as the equivalent to tasting the stars. That was what it tasted like.

"So, did everyone have an enjoyable Christmas?" Hannibal inquired, trying to make small talk before they started into the deeper things.

"Well enough. How about you, Dr. Lecter?" Will replied, taking a sip of his champagne.

"Fine. Fine. How're you holding up, Abigail? Any more anxiety issues?"

"Not really. I mean, school started again and it's stressful, but nothing bad. Just the average, everyday stress." She replied.

"Well, today isn't going to be a proper appointment, I don't think. I'd like to talk to Will about a plan of treatment." He explained to Abigail.

"Okay."

"I'd like to evaluate both of you, just to try and understand what I need to do. I got a very good idea of what Abigail's going through, and I think that she very well may have PTSD. You don't come out of a situation like hers with no battle scars. But I don't know you well enough, haven't spoken to you enough, to know whether or not you should be seeing someone. I'd like to do that now, if you don't mind."

"I... I don't like being psychoanalyzed."

"Well, don't think of it as a psychoanalysis. Think of it as a... Chat among peers."

"I'm not a fan of chatting."

"Then think of it as a long, philosophical discussion about life."

He paused for a moment and looked into his glass of champagne, now half empty. His curls flopped over his forehead as he leaned forward and sat the glass on the counter, next to the almost-empty bottle. He ran a hand over his scruffy face...

He was truly striking. Hannibal watched closely. Perhaps he wasn't being totally objective with this. Normally, he'd never pressure a patient into doing anything. He made certain that everything done was at the patient's own accord. But this was different. This was a chance to get to know someone who was more than a patient, or a patient's guardian, or a victim... This was a chance to get to know William Graham... The man he'd been thinking about a lot, the man that wouldn't leave his memory for a moment. This was a chance to actually get to know him. And he wasn't about to pass it up for anything in the world.

"Fine. I can deal with that. A philosophical discussion about life among scholars. Deal."

William stuck his hand out for Hannibal to take. A small smile spread over his thin lips and he took it quickly, skin up against skin for the second time that day. Hannibal licked his lips and felt himself longing for more. More touch, more contact. A brush of the lips. Fingers intertwined. Perhaps some more... Interesting activities that Abigail had no need knowing about at all... Things that involved leather and handcuffs and whips...

No.

He couldn't allow himself to think about that. Sure, his attraction could be physical. He liked the way that William looked. Rugged, yet boyish. Muscular and beautiful, but also twiggy and naive... But Hannibal had been pining after this imaginary man from the second he heard his voice on the other end of the line, regardless of looks... What he wanted was more emotional, intellectual... Not necessarily physical...

Besides, he was asexual. There was no way...

"Deal." He said with a smirk.

Fast-Paced

Abigail was downstairs, doing God knew what. He didn't want to leave her down there alone, but Dr. Lecter insisted. He rang his hands, feeling nervousness racking through him. He was finally alone with Dr. Lecter. And he was so... So... Much. So beautiful. So mesmerizing. So... Intense.

This was a different kind of intensity than what Garrett Jacob Hobbs had. This new intensity was the kind that never looked like it wanted to hurt you. He looked like he wanted nothing more than to study him. Eat him alive, maybe. But he didn't say anything for a long time. Dr. Lecter just sat across from him and looked him over. Eye contact had always made Will uncomfortable. Horribly uncomfortable. And being studied...

But there was something okay here. He didn't know what it was, but it was okay. It was okay for Dr. Lecter to look at him. To see him. It was okay for Dr. Lecter to examine every inch of him... He didn't feel vulnerable like he normally did. He didn't feel like he was going to mess up, do something horrible... He didn't feel wrong, or vulnerable, or scared... He felt... Almost... He felt almost more alive than he'd ever felt. As if the power of Dr. Lecter's gaze alone was enough to charge him, fill him to the brim with nourishment... It was a feeling that could not be replicated. It was a good feeling.

But even with the feeling on power, of nourishment, of comfort, the silence, as it does, became awkward eventually. Even Will, with his horrible social skills and his misunderstanding of bodily cues, could sense that. It was so thick that you could almost taste it, the awkwardness lingering in the air like a thick fog...

"So..." Will muttered.

"Talk to me, William." Dr. Lecter suggested, though it came out like a demand.

"About what?"

"Anything. Tell me about yourself."

"Not much to say."

"Well, what do you do for a living?"

"I'm a teacher. Part time at the college. And a dad. Full time. Though I sort of suck at that part of the job."

"Abigail tells me otherwise. She seems to hold some great admiration for you, William."

A small smile spread over his lips as he looked down at his hands. It did mean a lot, especially if it came from her... Though he couldn't hold her word to a very high standard. Her biological father had left her to raise herself while he had threesomes with random

strangers in the back room. He supposed that there wasn't much worse out there. Of course she would see him as a good father in comparison...

"Abigail tells me that you like dogs... And fishing."

"Yeah. I... I have 7 dogs. Um... Yeah... I really like dogs. They're like... Like my friends, really. And I used to go fishing a lot, but I don't anymore. Not since we left Garrett."

"Why's that?"

"I met Garrett at Abigail's school, but I fell in love with him after we went fishing together. We had our first kiss there, and he told me he loved me there, and he asked me to marry him there... Fishing in general just holds a lot of memories for me, ones that I don't want to revisit."

"I see... Now, Abigail told me that your husband abused you. Is that correct?"

Will felt anxiety well up in the pit of his stomach. He hadn't even talked about the abuse, or the rape, or anything like that. He'd tried his best to keep it all bottled up, tried his best to deny that it ever even happened... But maybe what he needed was someone to talk to. Maybe he needed a little therapy... And he certainly didn't mind having Dr. Hannibal Lecter as a therapist... God, Will had never even seen someone so gorgeous...

"Yes. That's correct." He finally answered.

"Do you want to tell me what happened? You are absolutely in no way obligated to tell me, but I would like to hear all sides of the story... And I have found that talking about lost love can be therapeutic to the healing process."

"Um... Yeah... Well... Garrett was really into sex... And I'm... Not so much. And that caused a lot of issues, I think."

"Yes, Abigail mentioned to me that you identify as asexual. Do you want to tell me any more about that?"

"Yeah. Um... Yeah, I'm ace. Homoromantic asexual. Always fun. It took me a really long to be okay with it. I mean, not only am I gay, but I also can't keep a man because I won't have sex with him. I mean... I can't help it. I... I am completely repulsed by the thought of genitalia other than my own. But Garrett was bisexual and... Well... He really liked sex. He had a lot of sex before me, and because I couldn't give it to him..."

"He hurt you? Is that right?"

"Not at first. Things were great at first. We went to a cabin for a weekend a few weeks after we met. And we talked a lot at night. He tried to make a move once, but I told him no, and he respected that. And we spent the whole weekend there, either talking for hours about life and love or spending hours not talking at all, and just enjoying each other's company. The first weekend was absolutely amazing. And so were the weeks following. We started living

together... I became a second father to Abigail, something she'd never had. We were in love. And we fought sometimes, but never that much..."

"So what changed?"

"It happened after the wedding. Just a few months after. He became a completely different person... And I knew we took things too fast, but I tried to believe that my Garrett was still there somewhere. But he wasn't."

"Tell me about that."

"He got angry. And he started lashing out a lot. I tried my best to keep him calm, to make him happy without sacrificing myself... He was so angry. He cheated on me a few times after we were married. I would come home from work and sometimes I found women's underwear on the floor of our room. I smelled perfume sometimes. One time, there was a half-naked man in our bathroom, and I didn't know who he was... But he... Um... He smelled like Garrett. I knew what Garrett smelled like. We never touched much, but I slept next to him. And he... He came out without anything but shorts on, and he walked out of the bathroom smelling like sex and Garrett... And then Garrett came out of the bedroom... And that was bad enough, but I had to cover it up to spare Abigail... I tried so hard to be a good husband. I did. But... He snapped."

"She mentioned..."

"He raped me. Brutally."

Will was shaking now. His entire body quivered, hands grasping at the denim in his jeans, digging his nails into them. He felt himself begin to panic. He had been doing so good today. He'd gone almost 2 weeks without a single panic attack. And now it was all going to crumble because of this... Because he needed to talk about his feelings. Talking about feelings was overrated. It just brought demons into the light.

"William, look at me."

His eyes snapped up, staring at Dr. Lecter. Will still couldn't get over how stunning he was. He was like a work of art. He was like a Van Gogh painting. He was like the Mona Lisa. He was so beautiful, and looking at him was like staring directly into the sun. So beautiful. So dazzling. So astounding... So blinding... He was so beautiful that it almost hurt. And it was such a strange beauty. It was intense, and unconventional. But Will had never been one for conventional beauty...

"I understand that you must be feeling a lot of things. But I must reassure you that none of this is any of your fault. You are the victim. You're going to have to deal with the aftermath, but you must remember that none of this, none of what has happened, is your fault."

Will let a small smile peek through. He liked being complimented by Dr. Lecter. He liked being noticed by him.

Part of Will wanted Dr. Lecter to reach out for him. He wanted the warmth of his hand pressed against his face. He wanted the brush of his lips against his. He wanted something, some sort of dizzying infatuation. Will Graham wanted Hannibal Lecter... Will Graham wanted there to be something more. Will Graham wanted Hannibal Lecter to love him.

Someday. Maybe.

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It was strange. Normally he'd be terrified. Normally, he'd be horribly offended, maybe enough to just storm out, walk away, pretend nothing happened. But now... It was okay. Compliments, something more... It was okay. And he knew that he should've pushed away, refused to allow himself to get close... After all, he'd been brutally abused and raped by his last husband... Why should he trust a man that he didn't even know? But... But Hannibal... There was something drawing them together, something that Will had felt ever since their first talk on the phone. Something that had been pulling them together from the beginning. Something resembling fate.

"I'm... I'm not sure what to say."

"I like you, Will. I don't know why, but I feel like there is something pulling us together. If you don't know what I'm talking about, tell me. There's a good chance that this is all just in my imagination, and that I'm just desperate for love. Because believe me, I have been desperate for love. Something beyond the physical. I'm a man of desperation, and while I would never admit that, I feel like... There's something about you. Something different. Something special. If you don't agree, tell me and we will not say another word. But do you feel it? Or are you indifferent to me?"

"I... I mean... I've been thinking about you a lot lately too... And you're... You're captivating... But I don't... I don't know... I mean, when I walked in and I saw you, there was definitely something. I know what you mean. I thought it was just me... But... I don't know... How... Appropriate? I just... I got out of a really bad relationship. I'm not sure if I'm ready... This is strange. I mean, you're my psychiatrist."

"No, I am your daughter's psychiatrist. I want to know you better... I just... I like you. I really, really like you. And I know that this is strange, and I would never force you to do anything that you don't want... But I guess... I guess all I'm asking for is a chance."

"I... I don't know. I'm not ready, and I'm... I'm messed up, okay? I'm autistic, you know? I'm autistic, and I'm asexual... I'm crappy at relationships. I've only dated Garrett, and you know how that turned out. I'm... I'm... I'm unlovable. No one's going to like me for me without turning on me... I'm... I'm broken."

"You are not broken, William Graham. You are not broken. You are wonderful. And this is completely inappropriate... And... I... I don't... I don't want to say this if I'm making you uncomfortable, but you are in no need of fixing. I am just as broken as you. I am not asexual, but I can't get off without pain. I require pain to be satisfied. And that's strange and weird and, dare I say, broken enough for me. But... If you're broken, so am I... And I hope I... I see you, William. I have been pining after you. I don't know what it is about you. But when we first spoke, I knew that there was something different about you... And broken or not..."

Will sighed deeply. These words were causing thoughts beyond comprehension to race through his head. A million different scenarios, a million different ways that this could play out. Some ended in happily ever after. Some ended tragically. All of them ended in death. But there was just this pull toward him...

Will found himself pressed against the ladder that was propped against the bookshelf that lined the wall as Dr. Lecter inched closer. Beads of sweat began to form on his brow as he

looked at the man. God, he was so beautiful, so... Mesmerizing. There was something that made Will long for him, want him, something that he'd not felt since his first kiss with Garrett. It was something more than a slight attraction of the romantic sort... Something more than a longing to love and to be loved... There was just something so raw that Will couldn't quite place, and he couldn't decide if he liked it or not. If he should just go for it or not.

That was when Hannibal reached out and took his hand. His hands were soft, warm, kind. Gentle. So different than Garrett's ever were. His hands were always rough and calloused, never comforting... But Hannibal's... It was almost like Hannibal Lecter was the other half of his soul...

"Just tell me if you want me to stop." Hannibal whispered...

That was when Will did the unthinkable.

He reached up, wrapping both arms around Hannibal's neck. Before he even knew entirely what was happening, he was pressed against the ladder, Hannibal holding him there. He didn't know how this had even happened, but as he stood there, lips pressed against Dr. Lecter's, feeling impenetrable and vulnerable all at once... He didn't care. He didn't care about anything else in the world. He just wanted Hannibal Lecter. He wanted Hannibal Lecter to love him. He wanted to stay like this forever.

Hannibal's arms reached over his head, holding to the rung of the ladder that sat just above Will's head, pinning Will back hard, but not so hard that he couldn't escape if he wanted. But the thing was, Will didn't want to escape. Every time that Garrett had kissed him, it was... It had been a fine experience, but he always wanted it to end quickly. But now... He didn't want Hannibal to stop.

Will let a small groan escape his lips. He didn't know what this feeling was, but he liked it. He knew that much. He felt Hannibal's erection through his khakis, pressing up against Will's hipbones. Normally, it would've made him uncomfortable to say the least. But with Hannibal, it was somehow okay. He didn't know how or why, but it was perfectly alright...

Hannibal backed away abruptly, like he realized he'd made some grave mistake. The warmth of his lips was gone, leaving Will pressed against the ladder with a dreamy look in his eyes, this hazy thousand-mile stare... He wanted more. Wanted Hannibal to keep kissing him. He didn't want any more than that, of course. But just the warmth of his lips, the feeling of his warm hands against his cold skin, the desperation in each move of his mouth... He wanted it all. Maybe Will was greedy, maybe he was just smitten... But god he wanted more.

Hannibal started to sputter out apologies, desperately asking for forgiveness, like he'd done something wrong, something unforgivable. But he hadn't. Never... Good god, never... Will took a small step forward, reaching out and taking Hannibal's hand. It felt like some daring move, since Will had almost never initiated contact. But there was just something so... Magical about Hannibal Lecter. He didn't know what it was, but it was just so...

"Don't stop. God, never stop." Will whispered, coming so close to the doctor that he was almost sure that their breath had intertwined and they were no longer two separate people, but one. Just one person...

Hannibal didn't hesitate. He just pushed Will against the ladder again and kissed him.

Hard

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Hannibal Lecter was in love.

Maybe that was too much. Probably way too much. But Hannibal couldn't help it. He was crazy for Will. He knew it the moment that their lips had touched. This was the man that he was going to spend his life with. This was the face that he was going to wake up to every morning from here on out. Those were the lips he was going to kiss for the rest of his life. Those were the hands that he would hold onto through the ups and the downs. That was the finger that he would one day slip a ring around as they vowed until death do they part.

Okay. Too fast.

It needed to start somewhere though.

Hannibal's hands were clenched around Will's wrists, shoving him up against the ladder. His lips were pressed against Will's, moving so perfectly in time that he knew that this was the way that he was supposed to spend his life. Will's back arched forward, pressing up against his body. The heat of Will's body seemed to transfer into his, giving him strength, making his heart beat harder, his blood pump faster, his head pound louder... Jesus Christ. This was just so much. Too much. Christ, Christ, Christ. He groaned involuntarily beneath his breath, holding himself hard against Will's body. Hannibal was a bit taller than Will, by only about an inch or so. But Will was sinking against the ladder, knees weak and giving out, breathing hard. It was like he was about 4 inches shorter, causing Hannibal's hardened erection to press hard into the upper portion of his left hipbone.

Jesus Christ.

His cock was growing harder by the second. He felt the urge to move his hand, away from Will's and away from the ladder. He felt the urge to just jam it down his pants and rub one out, all while still kissing his beloved Will. Or perhaps, he wanted something better than that. More than that. Perhaps he wanted to pull Will away from the ladder and turn that ass around, bend him over, rip off his pants, and shove it in. Hannibal was thinking with his dick in that moment, which was a bad idea. But that was all he wanted. He wanted to fuck him - hard.

Stop.

He couldn't let himself do that to him. Couldn't let himself think like that. He tried to will his mind away from the thought of fucking Will Graham. He could imagine it right then. Hannibal would lie down on the white sheets of his bed, cock against his stomach, hard. He'd rub himself with lube, make sure he'd be all lubed up and slick so that he wouldn't hurt Will too badly. Will would walk over, not a single speck of clothing on his body, all exposed and beautiful... He'd walk over and grab Hannibal's dick, rubbing a hand over it quickly. Then he'd turn around and slide down onto his length. Slowly at first, letting out long, low moans.

Jesus Christ, they'd be beautiful moans. Hannibal would be so far inside of Will and Will would cry out about how he could feel him all the way up inside of his stomach. He'd be trembling a bit, but it'd be okay. Hannibal would groan a bit, tell Will how beautiful he was, run his hands up and down Will's hips, gliding along the outline of his pelvic bones until he reached his long shaft, running his fingers up and down it as Will would quiver beneath his touch, causing him to lurch and grind against Hannibal's long, uncut cock, causing him to come close to screaming. Will would hike up and run up and down his cock... Christ. Will would bounce up and down, bringing himself up and down, slowly at first, but gradually picking up speed. Faster and faster he'd go, crying out every now and again. Yes. Yes. Will would say something along the lines of how he was hitting just the right spot. And Hannibal would be getting so damn close to the edge. *I'm so close. So close. So close.* Will would beg, beg for Hannibal to fill him up...

STOP.

He felt himself grow harder with every breath. Jesus.

His tongue slid between Will's lips, shoving it between his teeth and into the back of his throat. Christ. Christ. Christ. His lips, his mouth, it tasted like champagne, like stars. He wanted to go so much further, but knew that he couldn't. He couldn't. He couldn't do this to Will. This was going to end up hurting him, and then... Then he would be no better than Garrett Jacob Hobbs. He'd be no better than a rapist. He had to stop before he lost control of his own body.

He pushed himself away, letting go of Will's hands. God, those hands. The hands were so soft, lined and traced with paper cuts. An intellect. Nails short, but rough and choppy. Bitten off. Chewed off. His wrists were rough and lined with scars, obvious that there had been trauma in his past. But they were... Light. Like he'd never gone too deep. Like they'd faded with time.

"Don't stop. It's okay." Will moaned. Not in a sexual way, but in an exasperated, begging way. The kind of way that, perhaps, a beggar on the streets would plead for spare change. Desperate. Please, please, please...

His erection couldn't be hidden, though he would want to try. It was too big, too thick to be hidden by his khakis. Either way, he had felt it when they were kissing. This was so wrong. He couldn't treat Will like this, or else he was no better than his rapist. He had to be careful with this. He liked Will. So much. He wanted to be with Will. Wanted to love Will. But... He couldn't do that without scaring him away. Without...

This was going to be harder than he thought.

Literally.

"Why did you stop?" Will whimpered.

Will slumped against the ladder. He looked pale as a ghost, like part of him was terrified, but the other part of him... That other part of him... It was... Elated. And desperate. His clothes were a mess, hair frumpy now. Christ, just looking at him made his erection grow harder. It

felt so hard, so long... It was stretching and pressing hard on his pants, like they might explode at any moment. Jesus.

"Because, William... You're making me, um, as some might call it... Horny." He replied sheepishly, turning away from him, face turning red.

"I'm... I'm sorry. I didn't mean to. I just....I wanted... I... I like you. I like you a lot. And I wanted... I wanted to touch you. Not in that way, I'm still... I don't want that. But I want you. I think... I just... I didn't mean to..."

"It's okay, William. It's not a problem. I just need to... Get over it. And perhaps not do that again."

Will took a step forward, cautious, like he wasn't sure what he was doing. But he continued, taking another step forward, and another. He took hold of his belt loop, pulling him close, Will's beautiful eyes staring directly into his, lips so dangerously close...

"I want to do it again."

Hannibal's hand ran over Will's chest, slowly running his fingers over his shirt, over the buttons... He wanted him so badly. And that was why he couldn't do it again. He couldn't hurt Will. He was going to hurt Will, as if he'd not already been hurt enough. but there was just this attraction there, physical but not necessarily sexual, emotional but not yet love.

"And that's why I can't. You'll just get hurt. I'll hurt you. I'll hurt you, Will. And I couldn't live with myself if I did that." He whispered.

"I know. It's not fair of me to do this to you. It's cruel. But... I want you. I want to be with you. I don't know why. I just do. I barely know you and I keep throwing all of my morals and codes and lists out of the door and right now I just want to tear down these walls that I tried so, so hard to build and I just want to spend my life with you and I have no idea why but Jesus I want you. I don't believe in love at first sight but I feel this insane connection to you and I feel like I can tell you everything and I feel like I could kiss you for eternity and I feel like my life could be better with you and I feel like... Like... I don't want to have sex with you and that's so cruel to you but I need you. Okay? I. Need. You. And I don't know why. I just... I... I need you."

Hannibal let himself take a step closer, just a step. His erection, still obnoxiously evident, prodded against the base of where Will's shaft would start. Will's didn't so much as twitch, but it was big, big enough for Hannibal to feel with his own. The slight stimulation caused his heart to hammer and his body to yearn for him...

"I can't hurt you, William. I want you. I like you. I like you a lot. And I feel the same way. But I'm a very sexual person and you know that. I'm going to hate myself. I'm going to think of you in ways that I shouldn't and I'm going to want to do unspeakable things to you and I'm going to have such a hard time containing myself..."

"Then we work out something. I know that I don't really know you yet, but I want to. I want to fall in love with you and this is insane and I feel like this is really inappropriate but there's

something here. There's something between us, Hannibal. It's like you're the other half of my soul and I don't know why you're so... So... I don't know. I don't know, Hannibal. I just don't. But I want you. And I need you. And just because I'm a pain in the ass, just because I'm asexual... We... We're going to get around it. You are part of me and I'm part of you. This is so messed up but... I want to be with you. You're so easy to talk to and... I feel like I can be open with you about everything and you're so endlessly fascinating somehow and I am just..."

He couldn't stop it. He couldn't hold himself back. He had to. He had to do it. He grabbed him and pulled him close again, pressing his lips into Will's. He pulled Will up, grabbing him by the legs and pulling him up off of his feet. Kissing him roughly, he felt himself losing control... He was so stupidly in love with Will, even if he barely knew him. He didn't need to know him. Connections were made so quickly and...

Hannibal walked him over to the ladder, Will's legs wrapping around his waistline and his ankles crossing behind his back. He sat Will on the step of the ladder and shoved him harder against the ladder, kissing so roughly and so intensely and so passionately that he couldn't even think straight... Jesus Christ.

"Please... Please... Just... Please let me try. I've never felt like this before, Dr. Lecter. I've never felt like this. Not with Garrett, not with anybody. I've never felt so free, so loved... And I still don't want to have sex, I'm still repulsed by it... I... I still want to make this work. Please. Please try, Hannibal. Try for me. Please. I feel so pathetic and so stupid and so... I am so... I feel so... So wrong. I feel vulnerable. But I feel vulnerable in the right ways. And you make me want to be okay. You make me want to work. You make me.... I... I just... I want you so badly. I need you. I don't... I just... Please."

"William... William..."

"Help me. Let me... Just... Help... Help me... Jesus, I can't even... I'm just... Help me figure something out. Help me work out something with you. Help me work this out. Help me fall in love."

"I will. I want this to work as much as you. I just feel this connection to you and I don't know why. I just know that there's something about you that's pulling me to you and you... You feel like part of me. Like we were always meant to be together. And it sounds stupid... But I knew since the first phone call. Jesus... Give me ten minutes away. I'm thinking with my penis right now, okay? I have a massive erection that's not going to go away on its own. Let me go... Let me go... Resolve this issue and I'll be back. And then I'll tell you."

Will laughed a bit, nervous laughter. He slid down the ladder and back onto his feet. Hannibal planted a quick kiss on his forehead before running off into the room to the back of the room, which just led to a stairwell. He shut the door, a heavy mahogany door that closed with a satisfying click. He exhaled and quickly ripped off his khakis, undoing the button that was hardly staying closed to begin with. He yanked down, pulling his pants and underwear down quickly, leaving himself with nothing but his white button-down. He figured he'd better shed that as well, since he risked relieving himself all over it. He quickly undid it and threw it into a heap and found himself completely nude.

His erection sprung free, a good 8 inches long, maybe 9. He was always rather proud about his own length. 5 inches flaccid, 8 when erect. He was pretty proud of it. He sighed, plopping down on the stairs, leaning back against it. He let out a small whimper, sending chills down his spine as his fingers drifted over his shaft. *Fucking hell.* He curled his fingers around his shaft tightly, letting his mind drift to some place, some other universe where he could do whatever the hell he wanted to William Graham.

Hannibal grabbed Will Graham by the wrists and took his cuffs out. They were designed for this sort of thing, so they'd not dig into his skin. Will smiled softly, deviously, eyes making contact. Hannibal felt domination flow through him, power coursing through his veins as he tied up poor little Will Graham. He snapped the cuffs to the bed frame, leaving him hanging, legs dangling about 3 inches off of the ground. He grabbed them too, long and slender and perfect, and tied them back. His cock hung between his legs. Long, thick, perfect. How he would love to do unspeakable things to that man...

His prick was throbbing, hard and rough. The familiar bead of liquid had turned into what was basically a stream. Precum soaked his hands as he rubbed quickly, up and down and up and down. He gave out a low moan, thumb pressing up on the head and squeezing down toward the base, mimicking how it might feel to have sex with Will, mimicking how it might feel for his fantasies to become reality. Jesus... His heart rate increased as his fingers moved more and more quickly, practically soaked in his own precum now. Getting this off and going back out to see Will was going to be a pain, but he could rush upstairs and clean up... But that was not in any way the focus now. He was fantasizing that he was somewhere else, somewhere better.

Lube slicked his hands and shaft. Precum was building up at the slit at the head of his penis, mixing in with the slick. He stared at Will and smiled, walking around and inspecting him. Perfect. Beautiful. Hands still drenched in lube, he smacked Will's perfect ass for a moment, leaving his hand print on the skin before rubbing his hands around his round ass, creating two perfect, slick mounds. Fucking Christ. His cock throbbed, red and burning for the touch, for the sweet release. He grabbed Will and wrapped his arms around his torso, bringing himself up close, whispering two sentences in his ear. "You're mine now. You are mine and mine alone."

His breath fell into rhythm as he found a pace at which to jerk to. He dug his fingers deep into the stair. He dug deep into the wood next to him, letting out a small cry as the pleasure shot through him like a bullet. "William..." He muttered under his breath... William. William. William. Yes. William. His imagination roamed wild, but the only word that was on his lips... William. William.

Without a moment's hesitation, he grabbed William and pulled him in tight, ramming himself into his ass. Will lunged forward and let out a low, loud groan in a raspy voice. The sensation filled Hannibal to the brim as he pulled back out. He pressed the head of his cock against Will's hole, teasing and jerking it for a moment before shoving it back in. Fuck. He pressed his lips against the base of Will's neck, nibbling on his ear... Christ. He began grinding against Will, pushing and moving inside of his body. "Oh, oh, Dr. Lecter... Christ. Oh, Dr. Lecter... Yes, right there... Oh, you hit it. Yes... Yes... Dr. Lecter. Yes... Ah, yes, Dr. Lecter!" Will moaned his name as he moved back against him, grinding and moving up against him

rough and hard, causing him to start to pant. He ran a tongue against the side of Will's neck before sucking on it. Will... Will... Will...

"William!" He cried out, loud now, practically screaming. Jesus, this was going to be embarrassing. A man that Hannibal barely knew, a man that he only knew a little bit about... And he was jerking off over him. But he couldn't help himself. He hardly knew Will Graham, but he knew from the moment that they had spoken on the phone that he was the other half of his soul. It was insane how he could know that from a single day and a few phone calls. It seemed so grade school... But Jesus Christ he wanted him. And there was no way that he could think straight enough to actually talk to Will. He needed to finish this. He needed to get this out. And then he could think straight.

He broke away from the grinding and started pumping and thrusting. Fast. Hard. He tore his lips away from Will's neck and held back, holding him at arm's length as he started thrusting, in and out and in and out, fast and hard as he could go. It was unbearable. The pleasure brought him so close, so close... He was so close to climaxing. Oh, God... Will was crying out and moaning and screaming... Oh fucking hell, fucking hell, fucking hell...

His strokes became messier, more frantic. He needed to come. He could feel himself getting close. So close. His testicles felt heavy and tight now, and he knew that at any moment the cum was going to shoot out all over the stairs. So close. So close. So close. He cried out Will's name once more, hair flopping in his face as he threw it forward, then back. The stairs creaked beneath him as he called out, groaning so loudly that he was sure that Will could hear him. But he couldn't hold back now. He was so close, so close....

Hannibal grabbed Will's cock and started jerking him, hard and fast, helping him along. Will was crying out and screaming with pleasure at this point. He thrust and jerked in time together, back and forth and back and forth, causing the sensation to not only well up in Will with such overwhelming intensity, but pumping Hannibal full of cum, his balls so full and so tight that he knew that he couldn't hold out much longer...

"God, Will." He groaned with pleasure as the tightening feeling of his growing climax became stronger. Fuck, yes. God.

Pumping. Harder, harder, harder.

Oh fuck. Oh Will.

"Yes, Dr. Lecter! Yes! Please!" Will begged wracked with moans. He pumped in and out, thrust faster and faster, to the point where he knew that he couldn't hold back any longer.

He came

And he came.

His cum squirted on the ground next to him, pooling as his orgasm ripped through him. He let out a final cry of Will's name, so loud that he was surprised that the whole street couldn't hear. Jesus Christ. His prick twitched as cum came sputtering out, shooting out and onto the

ground below. Satisfaction filled him as he leaned back for a few moments. He needed just a second. Just a moment to compose himself.

He regained his composure after a moment before walking back to the door without a speck of clothes on. He opened it just a crack, poking out his head. He was sitting in the floor sitting between the chairs that they had been sitting in just earlier that day. He was looking down at the floor, refusing to make eye contact.

"Were you just masturbating to me?" He muttered, not looking up.

"I was. I mean... I'm obviously unclear of where we are in this relationship. It is a strange circumstance. But I was horny and couldn't relieve myself inside of you in real life, so I had to go do that in private. And I thought about you. Because you are who I am attracted to. You're the only person I've been thinking about." Hannibal replied, staying behind the door.

"... Thank you."

"What?"

"Thank you. My husband never... He'd cry out other names. James. Elise. Chris. Robert. Elena. Christina. And he cheated on me. But... I don't mind hearing you scream my name. I don't want to have sex with you. I don't want to watch you do that. I don't want to masturbate to you. But... Knowing that you're thinking about me is nice. I mean, this is absolutely ridiculous, and I don't know how this will work... But... Thank you."

"Well, um... You're welcome. I'll... I'll... I'm going to clean up in here and get dressed. And then we'll talk. I'm sorry about this... I just... I was..."

"Don't worry about it."

Hannibal smiled and hurried upstairs to his bedroom, cleaning up the sperm that was pooled on the bottom step. He cleaned it up, wiped off his own dick, and slid back into his clothes and sighed. He was okay. He was fine. And now he was finally clearheaded. He buttoned up his shirt quickly, and zipped up his pants. Sighing, finally ready to face his potential boyfriend, husband, lover, friend, something...

He opened the door.

"Okay. How about we have coffee and talk about us?"

Chapter End Notes

I'm sorry this is horrible. I'm asexual, and I'm actually kinda grossed out by sex, but I really wanted to expand my writing range, and therefore I started writing smut. This was my first attempt at it. I wrote this about a month or two ago. And I'm getting better, trust me, but this... Is horrible.

Dr. Lecter

Jesus. Christ.

What was happening to him?

Why was he okay with this?

Why was he okay with the loud Danish man screaming his name as he masturbated? Why was he okay with kissing this man so wildly and so passionately? Why wasn't he panicking? Why wasn't he having an anxiety attack? Why was he alright with this?

Why did it feel so good?

His penis hadn't budged, no erection. But Hannibal's sure had. It was long and thick, which Will could easily tell, even through his pants. They barely fit around it, looking like they might snap beneath it... They'd been kissing and Will had been able to feel it pressing up against his hip, occasionally brushing up against his own penis. It hadn't made him that uncomfortable, like it once would've. It was okay. He still didn't want to have sex, was still anxious at the very thought of doing anything without clothes on... But it was okay with Hannibal.

Will sat in the floor, closing his eyes, contemplating it all. This was moving so ridiculously fast. He barely knew the man... But it felt like there was something truly special, like they had known each other in another life, like they'd known and loved each other for years. Whatever this was... It seemed so insane, but so... So wonderful... It was like Hannibal Lecter was the other half of his soul, perfectly fitted together, forged by the gods to be the other person's life partner and soul mate...

Will had heard him scream his name multiple times, like his fantasy had been so intense that he couldn't help himself. He couldn't help but wonder what Hannibal was thinking about. What was Hannibal doing to him in those dreams, in those fantasies? Was he hurting him? Hannibal had mentioned getting off on pain. Perhaps Hannibal was whipping him, jerking him off, teasing. The whole thing, the idea of someone thinking about him this way... It made him anxious... but no. It was okay.

"God, William..." He was screaming and groaning and crying out. He could hear him through the door. Will closed his eyes. How did that feel? How did it feel to think about someone like that, let your fantasies rule over you for just a moment? How did it feel to think about someone in that way, letting an idea of them have power over you as you jerked and pulled and relieved yourself? How did it feel to do something like that? How did it feel to long for someone in the most primal of ways?

Will was curious... Didn't necessarily want to try it for himself, but he was curious. Very curious indeed. It wasn't so much the physical aspect that intrigued him. It was the emotional aspect. He was very curious about the emotional aspects of sex. Real sex. Not the rape he'd been through. But sex in which both parties consented. He was disgusted and afraid at the

thought... But he wanted to know what it felt like to be connected to another human being, a human being that he loved no less, in that way.

Hannibal's head suddenly popped out of the door. He was drenched in his own sweat, hair wet and clinging to his head, beads of water dripping down to the floor. He was hidden by the door, which made Will assume that he was still nude. He didn't have a shirt on, and Will could see the outline of his sculpted muscles. Beautifully sculpted muscles. Flecks of graying hair covering his chest. But Will quickly turned away, his eyes darting to the floor. No eye contact. He couldn't do eye contact. He'd made eye contact a couple of times with him earlier, when they were caught up in the moment, in the heat, in the passion. But now...

"Were you just masturbating to me?" He muttered, not looking up.

"I was. I mean... I'm obviously unclear of where we are in this relationship. It is a strange circumstance. But I was horny and couldn't relieve myself inside of you in real life, so I had to go do that in private. And I thought about you. Because you are who I am attracted to. You're the only person I've been thinking about." Hannibal replied, staying behind the door.

He sounded embarrassed. Like he'd not meant to cry out like that. Like he'd not meant for any of this to happen. It had all been a mistake. But... None of this was a mistake. This was all perfect. Every bit of it. He was happy. Christ, this was so strange. His daughter was downstairs, waiting on him, while he listened to some man that he barely knew jerk off to him while screaming out his name... But Christ this felt like the way that it should be... He looked up quickly at Hannibal again, eyes darting over his features for a moment before staring back down at the floor.

So many nights, he'd sit on the other side of the door. Garrett would've locked the door after Abigail went to bed. He didn't care that she could hear everything, though she'd never said anything. And Will would sit and wait for him to finish. He'd be moaning the names of other people, people he didn't know... It always hurt him. Hurt him so badly. But now... Just knowing that he was good enough for someone, at least for the time being... This was so strange. But Jesus it was so great...

"... Thank you."

"What?"

"Thank you. My husband never... He'd cry out other names. James. Elise. Chris. Robert. Elena. Christina. And he cheated on me. But... I don't mind hearing you scream my name. I don't want to have sex with you. I don't want to watch you do that. I don't want to masturbate to you. But... Knowing that you're thinking about me is nice. I mean, this is absolutely ridiculous, and I don't know how this will work... But... Thank you."

"Well, um... You're welcome. I'll... I'll... I'm going to clean up in here and get dressed. And then we'll talk. I'm sorry about this... I just... I was..."

"Don't worry about it."

Hannibal gave a quick, almost devilish smile before bolting behind the door. He heard racket from behind it, but it wasn't the same kind of racket that there had been before. This was just movement, quickly cleaning up, making himself presentable. Will sat up straight, trying to do the same. It took a few minutes, but he eventually let the door swing open, all the way this time. Will could see a messy white streak still on the bottom step that Hannibal had hastily tried to clean up. It gave Will a weird feeling as he jerked his head away and looked up at Hannibal.

"Okay. How about we have coffee and talk about us?"

"Right now?"

"Not today. Abigail is in the next room. We can't have her knowing about this whole experience right now, can we?"

"Why not?"

He just paused for a moment, giving him the most incredulous look in the world before turning back to the doorway where he had just fantasized and masturbated and screamed to him. Oh. Will looked away sheepishly. He looked up at him again after a moment as he came closer, walking in front of him. He watched as he slid down into the floor. His hair was still damp with sweat, and his face was a little flushed, a bit tired, and looking far more satisfied than he had a few minutes ago. But aside from that, he didn't seem... Different? He seemed perfectly normal. For whatever reason, Will had this weird idea of how sex and masturbation effected people. It just seemed so weird that someone could do that, become so vulnerable and so... So... And... And then just come straight back out as if nothing had happened.

"Did you, um... Have a... Nice... Thing?" He muttered awkwardly.

"Thing?" Hannibal muttered with a small chuckle, crossing his legs.

"You know... Thing. The thing. You were just doing."

"You'll have to specify."

"Screw you."

"Please, do. But to which thing are you referring to? The change of clothes? The quick cleaning of my stairs?"

Will rolled his eyes and crossed his arms, feeling slightly annoyed and embarrassed, but simultaneously lightened. Like Hannibal could be deathly serious, but he had this lightness that he carried with him. A way to relieve tension, to make things seem a little less important. He had a nice sense of humor... Very attractive indeed.

"You know what I mean." Will groaned.

Hannibal chuckled.

"Never mind." Will mumbled.

"It's just a word, William. You don't need to give it any power over you. No reason to fear it or cringe at it. You said it earlier, and just because it's a slightly more direct question, it doesn't mean you should fear it. It's part of life. No shame in it. Everyone does it. It's healthy, it's good for you... It's just a part of life."

"Your life, maybe." Will muttered.

Hannibal's eyebrows scrunched a bit as he stared at him, like he was shocked at what he'd just said. Like there was no one on earth who really didn't enjoy anything of the sexual nature. But Will just didn't. He didn't do that sort of thing. I was uncomfortable with it. He didn't like sex, didn't like the idea of it... He just... Didn't.

"What, you've never done it?"

"No. I... No. I mean, I guess I stuck my hands in my pants as a kid, but I kind of don't really... It wasn't sexual. Still isn't. You know?"

"I know. Asexuality. It's certainly an enigma to the outside."

"Yeah, I'm an enigma." Will grumbled.

There was a long pause, but not a painful one. It was... Soft. It was just the two of them, two grown men sitting in the floor. Suddenly, his hands reached out and took Will's. Normally, Will would've been hesitant, but it was okay when it was Hannibal. It was okay to have Hannibal Lecter's soft, warm, inviting hands curled around his, the hands that shook and picked and endlessly stimmed. It was okay. His hands were warm, and smelled a little like chlorine masked by the smell of something sweeter, like lilacs. That was new. Hadn't smelled like that a few minutes before. Will ignored it and just held onto his hands, soft and warm and inviting and...

"But... Yes. It was a very nice thing, thank you. Literally, thank you. I guess it wouldn't have been as good without knowing you." Hannibal laughed, scooting closer.

Will's face flushed.

"Sorry. I suppose that was a bit inappropriate. But in my defense, we did just kiss very passionately, and then you sat on the other side of the door and listened to me scream your name while I relieved myself. You cannot blame me for talking about things of the sexual sort. However, I will stop if you ask me."

"No, no, you have a point. I just listened to you scream my name. And kind of... Liked it. I think. Jesus, I did like it. Not because I liked imagining you or anything, but I mean... It's a nice change. To hear my name instead of a stranger's. I don't think I'll mind that. Ever. But um... Yeah... What did... Um... What'd... God, I'm so prude. I'm sorry, I'm such a prude. I just... I'm not good with talking about this sort of thing."

"Well, I'm glad that my fantasies and intense vulnerability gave you some pleasure, even if not the same kind of pleasure as it gave me. However, your prudishness... It's endearing. Probably more endearing than what I just did. I'm sorry about that. Usually, I don't become...

Aroused like that. I wouldn't say that I'm hypersexual, but I'm pretty easily aroused, but not like that. I've never had to leave to go... To go relieve myself. Not like that. Let alone moan and scream like that. I've never done that before. There's something different about you, something that makes me... Ever since I first heard your voice over the line of the phone... I've daily felt a stab of hunger for you. When my eyes found yours, when I saw you in the doorway... I was filled with nourishment at the very sight of you. No touch was needed. I want to touch you. I want to have your body to do what I please with. And when our lips touched, I couldn't do it. I couldn't handle it anymore. I had to have you. I knew that I couldn't. I knew that touching you without explicit consent would make me no better than your rapist. I'd be absolutely no better than Garrett. But I had to pay attention to my own desires as well, or any chance I had with you would end like your husband. I'd be lusting so much after you that one day I'd not be able to contain myself, and I'd do something incredibly stupid. And I was so aroused and well, uh, horny... I needed to go relieve myself. Or I'd not be able to pay attention to what you were saying. I wanted to know what you were saying and I wanted to pay close attention to every word that you say. I wanted to know. I didn't want to just think about getting into your pants. And I think that a massive erection might have been distracting for both of us." He chuckled.

"I understand. I mean... I'm not good with most things... Sexually. Physically. Touching you, kissing you... It was really great. It felt like nothing I'd experienced before. Like I was just caught in this passion and I couldn't contain myself. Like I was supposed to be with you and you alone. And this was how everything was supposed to be. It was wonderful. And I think that was really... Nice? I guess. But I understand that you're an allosexual. You like sex. And I don't. I understand that you get aroused easily. I... I just... I want this to be something. I guess. I want us to have something. To develop something. I want there to be an us. So if I make you... Uh... Horny every time we kiss, and you need to go get that out of the way and out of your head, be my guest. As long as it means that we're safe, and we're able to be together... I'm okay with you doing whatever it takes to make this a safe, healthy relationship for both of us. I want you to be happy and healthy, and if that means... You know, masturbating... Okay. Just don't shout for anyone but me. I don't understand this entirely. What we are, where we're going... But I want to be with you, and I think you do too. This is more than a fling, I think?"

"Obviously, William. You are more than a fling. I don't know what this is, what we are... But you're more to me than a one night stand, or someone for me to try and fix. You're... Part of me. I guess. I don't know if I believe in soul mates or love at first sight... But I believe that there's something deeper, some sort of connection between us. Just talking to you, just listening to you talk, just... Just being with you... This feels horrendously childish because I don't know you, not entirely. But I feel like I know you. Here."

Hannibal's hand wrapped tighter around Will's and led it up to his chest, pressing it over his heart so that Will could feel it beating. Beating inside of his chest, hammering in his ribcage, beating for him. *For him.* Will smiled softly and moved closer as Hannibal leaned in pecking him on the lips. Will smiled, like this man was able to bring out the better in him. His voice, his hands, his touch, his kiss... Everything about him... It was beautiful. There was just something about him. Something drawing him in...

"Um... I... I... So, what do... Uh. Anyways... Where do we start? With talking? I mean, we still have a little time. We should probably establish something. What this relationship is.

Where it's going. What we are. I just... I want to know. You can't have a long, important conversation with me about life and love and guilt and loss, tell me you like me, kiss me, jerk off to me right in the other room, and then... Not have some sort of base. It feels like we're going too fast, but... I need to know whatever we have is worth it. Worth putting myself on the line. I need to know that you won't leave me. I need to know that this isn't a one time thing. And... I need... I need to know that it's not going to end like last time."

"Well, I'm not psychic. I have no idea what the future holds for us. I don't know what will happen tomorrow, a week from now, a year from now... I don't know. But I know that there's something between us. Something strong, something powerful, something beyond us. And I can feel that. So why would I leave now? I understand what I'm getting myself into, and I don't care. I want you too, William. I feel like this is so rushed and so premature... But... I like you, Will. And maybe we should try doing this slower. I want to... I... What if we date? Really date first? We go out for coffee, I take you out every few nights."

"Okay. Okay."

Will smiled. Dating was nice. It sounded nice. Spending time with him, getting to really know him... Learning about him. Feeling more than... Feeling more than this rush. It was something that he needed. A relationship couldn't be built on a rush of passion. He needed to learn Hannibal Lecter before trusting him fully and letting everything down.

"Why don't we... We'll go out for coffee. Monday morning. We'll go from 10:30 to 3:00, if that's okay. We'll stay together until Abigail gets out of school. And then I suggest we do that on every day in which you do not work. And after all of Abigail's appointments, we should go out for dinner. Once she knows the nature of our relationship, of course. And perhaps every few days I can pick you up from work and we can go out."

"That sounds... Really nice. Whatever we have is wild and maybe we should tone it down a bit. Because what we did right then... That was madness. But I just... I want to be with you, you know?"

"I know. I understand... I want something here. I want there to be something between us. And maybe making out after a therapy session was not the way to go about it. But... I... I just want us to have something. There's something more than lust or desperation. You are a piece of my soul, and I a piece of yours. You are the other half. You are apart of me, William. I don't know how or why. But I just knew when I laid my eyes on you that you were different. It was like being full. Emotionally, physically. It was like being whole again. You're part of me. But we shouldn't go like this. This is ridiculous. Acting on impulse is ridiculous. I want to take you out, I want to form a relationship with you that is beyond the physical, and far beyond this quick passion we're in now. I want to know you, William."

"I want to know you too. I want to really know you. I want to fall in love with you. This is stupid and confusing and a little while ago I was in my classroom fantasizing about what you looked like, listening to your voice play on repeat in my head... And now..."

"The universe works in mysterious ways. Perhaps there's some force, some push of gods, that drew us together. That put us in this exact spot. Perhaps fate is at play. But I just know that I want you."

"And you really don't care about how fucked up I am?"

"I won't care about your broken pieces unless you care about mine. We're broken people, you and I. And perhaps our flaws fit together in a way that compliment each other. Like yin and yang. We're a beautiful mosaic of scattered, shattered pieces... And I will see nothing but beauty in them. I see nothing but beauty in you. I mean... I'm broken and shattered as well. I grew up in an abusive home. My sister, Mischa, died when we were young. I'm just as broken as you. Scars are part of me. But they're what make us who we are."

Will smiled softly and looked down at Hannibal's hands, the hands curled around his own. He watched as Hannibal took his hands and pulled them up to his lips, kissing him gently, softly... Will smiled softly, a genuine smile that no one had ever pulled out of him before. How had this happened? How had this started? Will wasn't sure, but he wasn't sure that he cared.

"We should get downstairs. I need to take Abigail home." Will chuckled softly.

"Okay. I don't want you to leave, but I suppose I must let you. But I will see you in a few days, correct?"

"Yeah. Monday."

"Monday."

Will smiled one last time and pulled himself up. This was such a strange way to start a relationship, a ridiculous way. But he didn't care. He dusted himself off and straightened out his rumpled shirt, the shirt that Hannibal had wrinkled when they'd been kissing. He inhaled slowly, getting one last smell of this place. It was Thursday afternoon. He had to teach tomorrow, and then he had the weekend. And then he would see him again. It seemed like such a long time to be away from him now, but...

Hannibal stood up with him and offered him his hand to take. Long, slender fingers... Hmm... Will took them without hesitation, taking any excuse to touch him again. He'd have to let go when they got to the lobby.... But in that moment, Will wasn't letting go.

They walked slowly, in comfortable silence, down the long hallways and down the flight of stairs. Holding onto Hannibal felt like second nature, and it felt safe... He reluctantly let go when they approached the lobby, when they came into sight of Abigail. She was sitting on the couch, playing on her phone and sipping at what Will had left of his champagne. He didn't mind. Perhaps it was illegal, but Abigail was more mature than any other girl her age, after having practically raised herself. He smiled and walked toward her, tapping her on the shoulder and telling her that they were done. Hannibal stood at the bottom of the stairs, just watching him, a small smile over his lips. Will turned a quick look when Abigail wasn't looking and smiled, the two of them knowing that this was going to quickly turn into something beautiful.

"Well, Abigail, I will see you next week. I've gotten a better understanding of how your family life works, and I think that I will be able to better understand you now. I'll talk to you next week, and I look forward to our next meeting. It was very nice meeting you, Mr.

Graham." Hannibal said from the stairway, his soft Danish accent and his kind words ringing in Will's ears.

"Nice meeting you too, Dr. Lecter."

"Bye." Abigail laughed with a wave, standing up and wrapping her scarf back around her neck, covering the scar that she'd had since she was young.

"Goodbye, Abigail." Hannibal replied with a smile, giving a small wave as they walked out.

Will smiled to himself as they walked out of the building, back into the freezing air. It was cold, but it was okay. With all the kissing and the kind words that had been exchanged, Will was pretty sure that he could stay warm in the arctic. He was filled to the brim with something like happiness, but an emotion that dug much deeper into the skin, something much more powerful, something much better, than just happiness. Something better than what he'd felt on even his wedding day, what he had thought had been the best day of his life. What could this feeling be? He wasn't sure, but he knew one thing. He liked it. He ruffled a hand through his hair as he unlocked the car and hopped in the driver's seat, Abigail taking the passenger's seat this time. He wanted to drive this time. She smirked as she slammed the door shut, for reasons that Will wasn't quite sure of, but he hardly noticed. He had Hannibal's eyes and voice dancing through his mind.

"You two had sex." Abigail said bluntly, full of snark and sass and something else.

Will didn't say anything. He just laughed and pressed his forehead into the steering wheel for a moment before speeding away.

Not Yet

He couldn't tell whether he should be smiling or sobbing.

He missed Will like he was missing part of his own soul. Like there was a hole in the middle of his heart. Like someone had cut out a hole in him and now he was just hollow. It had been mere hours. It was nearing midnight now, and there had been euphoria for a long time. Two hours and 23 minutes, to be precise. From the moment that Will had left to the moment that he came back down, his head had been in the clouds. And then... After that... It felt hollow. Like Hannibal needed to be next to him. He wanted to have him in his view. He felt this uncontrollable stab of hunger, and it was starving him, sucking him of all nutrition. It was like having been in the desert for a year, not a drop of water, not a morsel of food... And then you're given the meal fit for a king. And it fills you up for awhile, but when the hunger comes back, it's stronger than ever. That was what it felt like.

He was lying in the floor where Will had sat earlier. Where they'd talked and talked, where life had started to make sense. He could still smell him there, the soft fragrance of dog fur and lemon and mahogany wood and champagne and salted caramel and that smell right after the rain. He was a mixture of sharp smells and innocence, even his scent being that mixture. He'd been through so much. Rape, abuse... But he maintained this innocence, barely even able to say the word "masturbate" without cringing. It was the innocence and sharpness and it was beautiful.

Christ, he wanted him back in his arms.

It was unbelievably clingy of him, and it was going to be a character flaw that would undoubtedly get on Will's nerves. But when he clicked with someone, he didn't want to be away from them. And he had never clicked quite so perfectly with someone as he just had. Will was not a fling, not a one night stand, not even a maybe. This was the man that he was going to spend the rest of his days with. This would be the man that he would marry. This would be the man that he would truly have something special with. This would be the last face and the first face that he'd see every single morning. Those arms would be the arms that would hold onto him as he drifted off to sleep. Those eyes would be the eyes that he would look into every single day, even if they weren't looking back.

Christ.

Hannibal inhaled one last time, until he couldn't smell Will Graham anymore. This was so ridiculous, and moving way too fast... But...

He rolled his head to the side, where the ladder sat. The ladder that held him up when Hannibal had kissed him. The ladder that he'd held onto when he was trying desperately to keep his composure, and had ultimately failed. It was so... So intimate. Christ. All that Hannibal wanted to do now was kiss him again. No sex, no unexpected erections, no running away and jerking off to avoid losing control around him and trying to go further. Just... Kissing. Simple, quiet, passionate... Kissing.

Or perhaps just talking. Hearing Will's voice was calming. So strangely calming. It was like everything faded away and the world was just black, nothing but him and him alone. William... William...

He needed to work. He had paperwork to go through, and had to write his sister, who refused to get a phone and insisted he actually write out his letters. He and Mischa had come to America on their own when they were in their teenage years, and it had ended with Mischa falling ill and dying of some mystery disease. But Mischa had not been his only sibling. He had his other sister, Aliz, and his brothers, Mads and Lars. But Mischa had been the only one to join him in his search for a new life. The others had stayed behind with their parents. Lars and Mads hadn't talked to him in years, but Aliz still insisted on writing, always writing. Never texting, never calling. Writing. Not that he really minded. He liked being classy. Old fashioned. He stood up slowly, hoping to get another whiff of Will's scent before moving to his desk.

He sighed and stretched, his joints and muscles aching. God, he was getting old. He had thought for a long time that he was practically invincible. But now age was taking him slowly, taking his joints and his resilience. He groaned, closing his eyes and feeling generally cruddy. He popped his knuckles as he made his way toward the desk, pain shooting up and down his knee. He knew that he needed to get a cane or something, but he didn't want to admit it. He was just trying desperately to hold onto his youth by rejecting everything that would make him feel as old as he was.

How had he managed to get someone as young as Will? He wasn't sure how old Will was, but he certainly wasn't anywhere near as old as he was. There wasn't a single gray hair on Will's head, while Hannibal's entire head was streaked with gray. Hannibal was older... And Will was still young, still so full of life...

He just groaned and shook it off.

He hurried toward his desk and sat down, sifting through papers. They were usually stacked very neatly in organized piles, but Hannibal had been cleaning hastily before Will came over and he'd payed little attention to how he organized them. He just threw them together, until they looked nice enough. He started sifting through them, searching for Aliz's last letter so that he could respond accordingly.

That was when he found the little scrap of paper that didn't belong there.

It had been torn off of a bigger page and sat down on his desk for him. In sloppy handwriting, handwriting that was nowhere close to his own elegant script, was scribbled a short note for him.

(410) 982 - 4264

text, don't call.

William.

It was undoubted. It was William who had left it there. He didn't know how he knew, but the scribbled handwriting was Will Graham's. Hannibal's face lit up, smiling brightly. He didn't have to wait now. He could talk to William, and he didn't have to be alone now. He didn't have to wait the weekend. He could just text him... Hannibal smiled, perhaps far to brightly, and grabbed his phone from the corner of the desk.

It was late. It was midnight, far too late to be texting someone who had to work in the morning... But he didn't care. It'd been hours and it felt like he was going through withdrawal already. It was like he'd gotten a taste and he was hooked... He smiled, and typed the number into his contacts. William... He smiled and typed out a short message, pressing send.

H: William?

Without skipping a beat, a text came back.

W: Dr. Lecter?

H: Call me Hannibal.

W: Call me Will.

H: I prefer William

W: Then I prefer Dr. Lecter.

H: Fair enough. What are you doing still awake at this hour when you have work in the morning?

W: Sleep typically does not come until around 4 in the morning, and doesn't often respect my work schedule. What are you doing awake?

H: I could not stop thinking about our time together today. I want to see you again soon. So, with your face running through my mind, I couldn't will sleep to come.

W: Yeah, I've been thinking about you a lot today too.

H: I'd hope so.

W: I think Abigail caught on to our little love affair. As soon as we got in the car, she asked - no, she TOLD ME - that we'd been having sex.

H: Well, one of us, perhaps. Not both of us, sadly.

W: (-_-)

H: Okay, not sadly. I'll respect your boundaries.

W: I appreciate it.

H: Do not appreciate it. EXPECT it. No one deserves to have their boundaries violated. Anything that I do will be with your explicit permission. I will not become like your ex husband. Next husband, maybe.

W: You flatter me, but we did just meet.

H: Perhaps, but I know that this is going to become something more than just a few dates. You're... Special.

W: I understand. I feel the same way. There was just something... Different about you. I don't know what it is.

H: Fate. Destiny. The gods.

W: You don't strike me as someone religious. If anything, I'd guess you were an atheist.

H: Oh, believe me, I was. Until I met you. I've never felt religion until my lips meant yours. And perhaps you turned me into a believer. Because there had to have been something that pushed us together. Something bigger than us.

W: Your flatter doesn't cease to amaze me. But perhaps we should tone it down, seeing as my daughter is staring over my shoulder.

H: Oops. Tell her I say hi.

W: Yeah, she said that she'll "fuck you up" if you hurt me, so I guess that's something.

H: Wouldn't dream of it.

W: Mmmmhhhmmmm. Says the man who "can't get off without pain."

H: It's true, I've dabbled in BDSM. So while I may fantasize about ravishing and using and destroying your body from time to time, I will never, ever, EVER do that to your heart, soul, emotions, feelings, or mind. I will protect you with all that is in me. And I will never hurt your body either, not unless you want me to.

W: That's sweet. Thank you, Hannibal. But I'm pretty sure I don't want you to "ravish" my body. I'm okay with kissing, please.

H: Fair enough. I can live with that.

W: So what are you up to?

H: I SHOULD be writing to my sister in Denmark, but I instead am sitting here talking to you. Not that I mind. You're far more interesting.

W: I thought you said you lost your sister?

H: People can have more than one sibling, William. I had Mischa, who I lost. And then I have Aliz, who I am writing. And I have two brothers, Mads and Lars.

W: Ah. My parents stopped with me because I was so difficult as a child, with the autism and whatnot.

H: Or perhaps they knew that they couldn't get any better than you. You're perfect, William.

W: Yeah, yeah.

H: You are... But anyways, aside from that. What are you up to?

W: Abigail is watching a movie, and I'm sitting with her. She needs to get to bed, but I'm capable of showing sympathy. She hates sleep as much as I do. Nightmares.

H: I know. I get them too. What movie is it?

W: Shawshank Redemption, I think. I'm not paying much attention.

H: Oh? It's a good film, you should watch.

W: I'd rather talk to you.

H: Well, then I guess that's okay. I'm glad.

W: Yeah, yeah, don't get big headed. I like you a lot. But I'm not going to constantly flatter you the way that you flatter me. I'm not that kind of person.

H: Sure seemed like it when you were telling me how much you needed me earlier. And how you didn't want me to stop kissing you.

W: Yeah, well at least I didn't go hide on the stairwell and jerk off while screaming your name.

H: Well played.

W: Yeahhh

H: May I ask you something?

W: Anything

H: How old are you, and how much does age matter to you when it comes to a relationship

W: I'm 40. I know, pathetic. I didn't have a proper relationship until I was 37, lived with my parents until I was 38, and I didn't lose my virginity until I was 40. I'm ridiculous. But as for age gaps, Garrett was 46 when we met, so he's 8 years older than I am. Age means very little to me.

H: You're still a virgin, William. It doesn't count if it's rape. If you are going to lose your virginity, it is not going to be to some cretin who didn't know how to treat an amazing man correctly. It's not going to be the scum of the earth. Rape is not sex. It's not about sex. It's

about control. And while I do like to have my fair share of control, I will never EVER do it without consent.

W: Okay, so what? I die a virgin? I know that I'm asexual, and I have no desire for sex at all, but dying a virgin does seem embarrassing. From everything in pop culture and media and everything else? Being a 40 year old virgin is not something to be proud of.

H: It's nothing to be ashamed of if you have no interest or longing for sex.

W: I know. It's just that I'm already so different... I feel like I don't need another reason to be weird. I'm a gay ace. I'm autistic. I'm a rape victim. I go mute for days at a time. I mean, there's not much normal about me. Sometimes I don't want to have that on my list too.

H: So what do you want? Do you want me to take your virginity the right way? Because if someone is going to, I'd like it to be me. I'd do it in a way that it wouldn't scar you or damage you emotionally or hurt in any way. I won't do it if you don't want me to, obviously. But if you really don't want to be considered a virgin, don't say that your rapist took your virginity. Say that someone you love did.

W: Whoa there, slow down, I just met you. I don't love you yet, and I don't want you to touch me like that. No. Not... Now. Or anything. Take me out first, and then we'll talk about it. Whatever this is, whatever this becomes... We'll figure it out later. But take me out first, let me get to really know you. I just don't want to go around saying I'm a virgin.

H: Virginity is a social construct. But the basic meaning is that you've never had sex. You've never had sex. But I will not touch you unless you want me to. It was only an offer.

W: Gotcha. But still no thank you. Still ace, still sex repulsed.

H: I understand. It was an offer, not me trying to pressure you, or anything of the sort. I was offering.

W: I understand, it's fine. But back on track... How old are you?

H: I just turned 50. Is that okay?

W: Yeah, I already said I don't care about age. When was your birthday?

H: November 22. When was yours?

W: June 19.

H: Six months away. Perhaps we can celebrate it together.

W: I think I'd like that.

H: Might I ask another question about you?

W: Sure

H: What is your middle name? I'm just curious. I like calling people by their full names.

W: David Michael. William David Michael Graham. What about you?

H: I don't have one. It's just Hannibal Lecter VIII. I come from a pretentiously wealthy family, and being the second or third or fourth or eightieth of a name is a common thing. However, the only person in my family that I have not cut ties with completely is Aliz. I despise my father. I've thought about changing my name, even if it's just adding a middle name. Just so there's a disconnect between myself and him.

W: I think that you should go for it, if you hate your father. What would you put for a middle name?

H: I thought about Oakley. Hannibal Oakley Lecter. I don't know. I just think that it sounds nice.

W: I like it.

W: Scratch that, Abigail said that you'll be associated with an extremely flamboyant, stereotypical gay YouTuber, I guess. Nothing wrong with being flamboyant or anything, but it doesn't suit you.

H: Okay, that's true. I'm not exactly a flaming homosexual. I'm ridiculously posh, perhaps, but I don't exactly go wild with the gay stereotypes or anything. But figuring out a middle name isn't urgent or anything. I'll figure it out eventually.

W: Maybe I'll help you out.

H: Maybe I'd like that.

W: Can I ask you something now?

H: Always

W: Um... When you were... You know. Doing that thing earlier. Masturbating. To me. Um... I don't do that, and have no real desire to. I mean, I probably wouldn't freak out like I would if I had actual sex, but I just don't want to. But um... when you were thinking about me. What did it feel like? I guess? Like... I don't know. It seems like there'd have to be some sort of emotional aspect there. I know nothing about sex, but I admit that I'm curious about the emotional aspect. Is it purely physical, or is there something more?

H: Well, okay... This is a little harder to answer. I don't oftentimes shy away from touching myself. It's just something of a release, I guess. It's calming. I usually just do it when I can't sleep, or in the morning, sometimes multiple times a day. It's never been some deep thing for me. It's just something that feels good and that I do a lot. It feels good. I haven't had a steady partner in 6 months, and I've slept with maybe 3 girls in that time frame. For someone who likes sex as much as I do, 3 times in 6 months isn't a lot. Isn't enough. So I do it because it's a substitute. But it's never been emotional to me. But when I did it earlier... I felt more vulnerable than I ever had. Fantasizing about you was enough to make me scream, which

you'll find is not something that I do. I've always been fairly quiet, other than the occasional groan... But even in my imagination, you're different. You're the only person I can picture myself loving. I have never truly loved someone, I don't think. But there was something that clicked with you, and I don't know what it is or why... But perhaps you should see for yourself. I cannot speak for anyone but myself.

W: I really don't fully understand the whole process. I mean, I know what sex is. I know how it works. Well, straight and gay sex. Still confused about lesbian sex. But I don't understand the emotional aspects. The first time I had "sex" I was screaming and crying and begging him to stop. So I doubt it'd be a good time for me. But as someone who barely understands emotion? I am interested in what happens there. I can't feel much, and when I do, it's very confusing to try and sort out in my own head. So I'm interested in emotional aspects of sex. But still afraid and disgusted and uninterested in the physical act itself, if that makes sense. But you know, maybe I will try it one day. Probably not, but I'm not going to say absolutely not. I PROBABLY wouldn't have an anxiety attack or anything since it's just me, but still. A bit afraid to try anything of the sort. But I won't cross it off completely.

H: Well, that's very openminded of you. I'm sorry I can't really explain emotional aspects of it because I've never truly felt anything outside of the physical before you. I don't think I've loved anyone before. I've liked having someone to be around, but love? No.

W: Are you saying you love me?

H: Not yet.

The Interrogation

"Are you sexting Dr. Lecter?" Abigail inquired in an accusing voice.

She'd been accusing him of sex all night, though she knew quite well that he would not be having sex with Dr. Lecter in this lifetime or any other. He'd not be having sex with anyone, if he could help it. William, of course, would not indulge her in her childish teasing, and he mainly just ignored her. But they were talking about love and sex and the emotional aspects of masturbation, something that neither of them fully understood.

Will could feel pure empathy when he wanted to. He could see through the eyes of others. But he didn't. He'd shut it down because it hurt too much. It hurt his head. Caused everything to get jumbled and confused. Made everything that he felt to get all jumbled up. So emotions tended to shut off until they were provoked enough, and even then they sometimes got confused. Sometimes he laughed when he wanted to cry. Sometimes his anxiety manifested in strange forms. But when he focused hard enough, or when he didn't TRULY know someone personally, he could empathize. Ever since he was a child, he would empathize with the people he saw on TV. Whether it was the good guy or the bad guy, it never really mattered.

But now... Will was curious. What did sex, what did masturbation, what did fantasy... What did it do for the emotions? Someone who could barely begin to grasp his own, someone with the most complicated emotional complex in the world, was desperate to know. He wanted to know what it was like to feel connected to another human being in that way. He was desperate to know. And while Will could empathize with Hannibal all day, figure it out... But all of it would mean nothing because Hannibal didn't know any better than he did.

He knew the physical aspects. Knew how good it felt to him. But he didn't understand emotions either. Maybe they were one in the same in that way. Neither of them were good at it this sort of thing. Neither of them knew how to handle emotions when they had them, neither of them knew how to sort them out. Hannibal knew how to handle the physical, was good with the physical. Will knew how to analyze situations, and he knew how to see emotion, even if he couldn't always put his finger on what it was. But neither of them knew how to deal with the emotions of their own. Perhaps they were going to have to figure it out together. And maybe, one day, Hannibal could tell him what it felt like. Maybe Hannibal would know what the emotional side of masturbating and sex felt like... Maybe...

Christ, what was this man doing to him?

Before Hannibal Lecter came into his life, he would've never let himself think about these things. He would've never been interested, perhaps. Or maybe he'd be interested, but he'd be too afraid to think about it. He'd be panicking. He'd be having flashbacks to the night when he was raped. But now talking about it, thinking about it... It didn't hurt so bad. Did it make him uncomfortable? Yes. But was he panicking? No.

"Dad. Are you sexting him?" She whined, trying to get his attention.

"No, Abigail." He groaned, shifting so that she couldn't see the screen if she tried, tapping out another message.

"You'd not be trying to hide your phone if you weren't sexting him."

"Abigail."

"What are you talking about?"

"Abigail."

"Is he sending you dick pics?"

"Abigail."

"Does he have a giant dick? I bet he does. He looks like he has a monster dong."

"Abigail, that is not appropriate."

"I say inappropriate shit all the time. Since when do you care?"

"Since you started talking about your psychiatrist's 'monster dong.'"

She smirked, leaning back and looking particularly pleased with herself. She crossed her arms, a smile that only a rebellious teenager could flash. She was a rather rebellious teen sometimes. He put up with a lot and never really scolded her for cursing or saying something inappropriate. She'd raised herself and had fallen asleep to the sex screams of strangers coming from the next room every night for years. He didn't mind if she said some inappropriate things. But when she started talking about her psychiatrist's dick, he put his foot down.

"You're the one who would know. You had sex with him." She teased.

"We didn't have sex, Abigail." He replied, typing a quick reply to Hannibal absentmindedly.

"Yes you did. You came out and your clothes and hair were all frumpy and his hair was all sweaty and his shirt was half unbuttoned. I've seen enough post-sex people to know when someone's been having sex."

"Yeah, but here's the thing. I'm asexual. That's not what happened."

"What happened then?"

"Do you tell me all about what you do with boys? You went on a date last Friday and came home with messy hair and frumpy clothes. I didn't pressure you to tell me anything that happened. Why are you asking me?"

"Well, one, you're my dad and haven't been in a steady relationship since Garrett. And I'm concerned. And secondly, you had sex with my psychiatrist."

"I didn't have sex, Abigail. I'm still asexual. Nothing changed."

"Then what happened?"

She was pestering and he didn't like lying. He hated hiding anything from her. He had lied to her for months when her father had been cheating and lying... He had lied to her to protect her from the pain that he had been feeling. But it hadn't saved her. It didn't bring her peace, it didn't spare her of the pain of the divorce... It didn't spare her of the pain of being ripped away from the only home she ever knew by some man she'd only just met a year before. Everything she'd ever known had been taken. The least that he could do was tell her the truth now.

It might make Hannibal angry though. He had mentioned not wanting her to know about them quite yet. Or, at least not knowing what they had been doing in there. More specifically what he had done. He didn't want his patient knowing what shameful thing that he had done over the fantasy of her father. But would it be a betrayal? Would it be a betrayal if he told his daughter what they had done?

He decided that he'd just text. He scrolled up quickly through their text messages, reading them again for a moment. He knew he needed to hurry, and he knew that he was acting ridiculous... But he wanted to relive those short moments, the texts they'd exchanged, just for a moment. Just long enough to feel him all over again.

H: Not yet.

W: Well, first of all, can I ask you how you know that we're going to be any different than any other one of your couples in the past? I mean, we just met. How do you know that we're going to fall in love? When is 'yet'?

H: Because nothing ever felt so right as the moment I met you. The moment I laid eyes on you. The moment that my skin made contact with yours for the first time... I knew. I don't know how I knew, but I knew. Your voice over the phone. Your lips pressed up against mine. Everything points to you, William. I don't know how long it's going to take for me to fall in love with you. I guess we'll have to wait and see. But something tells me that it will not take long.

W: So what does this mean for you? Might I ask how this time was different? This is strange, me asking. But the emotions of the human mind truly intrigue me because I have a bad grasp on them. Autism. My feelings are there, but they're jumbled together and hard to fully understand. And you're a sexual human being but have as weak of a grasp as I do. I just... I want to know the emotional.

H: It felt more like having sex with someone I love than it typically does. I've never been in love before. Ever. But when I met you, I knew that there was something different with you. And when we kissed, it was more intimate and more intense than it's ever been before. And then on the stairs, when I was fantasizing about you... When my hands were all over your body, when I had you bending and mewling to my every whim... It was less like having rough, kinky sex that I oftentimes either have or think about having, and it was more intimate than that. More personal. And I felt far more vulnerable while I did it. No one else can make

me scream with a mere thought, William. If that provides any insight. It's not a lot, I know. But I'm like you. I'm just like you. I don't understand my own emotions well. Hopefully my thoughts can become more rational and articulate as our relationship progresses and I can tell you all about it.

W: I understand, I think. Or as well as I'm going to right now. Maybe I'll understand better one day. And don't tell me ALL about it. I don't want to hear about your kinky fantasies.

H: I'd rather tell you about all the other things I'd like to do with you, other than sex. I want to kiss you again, but not only like how I kissed you today. I want soft, slow kisses. I want to hold hands with you in public, and there would people staring because of how good you and I look together. I want to cuddle with you late at night, when neither of us can sleep and we're trying to ward of each other's nightmares. I want to play with your curls as I read, your body pressed up underneath me, fast asleep. I want to teach you my culture and my language. I want to laugh with you, laugh with you in a way that I'm certain that neither of us have before, laugh until we're choking and laughing. I want to dance with you, I want to hold you, I want to take you to the opera, I want to go fishing with you, I want to cook you gourmet meals, I want to go on morning jogs with you to take the dogs out, I want to heat your car up on the mornings you have work in the winter so that you can be warm on your way to work, I want to send and receive texts about how we're thinking about each other. I want you more than I could ever want a kinky fantasy.

W: Jesus Christ you're a fucking dork.

W: We have a snoop. She wants to know if we're sexting.

H: We're emotional sexting.

W: What the hell Hannibal

H: Ha! You called me Hannibal.

W: Fine, then you start calling me Will.

H: Not how this works, William.

W: Abigail wants to know if you're sending me dick pics

W: Now she says that you look like you have a monster dong.

H: I do. It is quite monstrous.

W: Yeah, again, I'll stay on your lips, not your monster dong.

H: Alright, again, I can handle that. As long as I can have you. Though you are missing out. It's enormous.

W: Well, I don't know about your literal dick, but you're acting like a enormous dick.

H: Fair enough. I'll stop talking about it now

W: Please do.

H: Has she been pestering since you left my office?

W: Started the moment we left, hasn't stopped. Because of your little self-love session and your lack of discretion about it, she thinks we BOTH had sex.

H: Did she hear me screaming?

W: Not that I know. It was just general frumpiness, I think. Sweaty hair, shirt halfway unbuttoned? Could you be more obvious?

H: What, you didn't like it? I thought I looked pretty dapper myself.

W: Okay, I won't deny it. You're very aesthetically pleasing

H: That's all? I'm no better than a pastel background or a scenic photograph?

W: I like you, Dr. Lecter. I like you more than a picture. But I don't like you like that.

H: I don't like being aesthetically pleasing. I'm more than a pretty face, William.

W: I know.

Will let a small smile spread over his lips again. He really liked talking to him. Even just over texting, even just typed words... It made his heart flutter with joy. He really, really liked Dr. Hannibal Lecter. There was just something about him that seemed so new and exciting and special. There was something far beyond the coventional, something far beyond what they had known... They were meant to be together. There was no denying it. There was just something so spiritual, something so new, something almost supernatural... It made Will feel stupid for letting himself fall head over heels for someone that he hardly knew... But he didn't entirely care. After that kiss, after these conversations, whether deep or shallow, light or heavy... There was no way in hell that William Graham was ever letting Hannibal Lecter VIII go.

W: May I ask you something?

H: Anything, my love.

W: Can I tell Abigail what happened between us? She's not going to stop accusing us of having sex if I don't.

H: Which part are you hoping to tell her?

W: Just the kiss. She doesn't need to know everything.

H: Alright, that sounds fine. I don't mind, as long as she doesn't exactly get the specifics. But if this turns out like I hope, she will find out about us eventually.

W: Okay, dork.

H: Is dork a term of endearment?

W: Perhaps.

H: Alright then, dork.

Will smiled like a little teenage schoolgirl with a crush. He rolled his eyes and turned the phone off for the time being, shifting onto his side toward Abigail, who was staring at him with a smirk on her face, like she practically lived to torment him about his love life. He shifted onto his side and looked her in the face. Not the eye, but he looked at her face, mainly her lips.

"We kissed. That's it. Calm down."

"Wait... Seriously?"

"Yes, Abigail. Seriously. We kissed. That's all."

"You kissed a guy who you barely know? Wow, you go dad."

He rolled his eyes at her and clicked on his phone again, typing a quick text message to Hannibal. It was most likely going to end up with Will annoying everyone because he wouldn't be able to stay off of his phone, being too busy texting his new boyfriend. Or friend. Or... something. He didn't know what they were, or what they would become. But whatever they were, Hannibal Lecter had him wrapped around his finger, winding him up and making him fall stupidly in love. And that was going to ripple, and it was going to drive anyone else around him crazy.

"Are you guys going to go out? Like on dates and stuff?"

"Yes, Abigail."

"Are you guys gonna move in together?"

"Why?"

"Because he's place is massive."

Will just rolled his eyes.

"Do you love him?"

"Not yet."

"Will you?"

"Perhaps."

"And then we move in with him?"

"Go to bed."

She whined.

"Bed."

She groaned and rolled off of the couch and headed back toward her bedroom.

"Love you!" Will called.

"No you don't!" She replied, running down the hall and closing the door.

Will laughed and stood up, deciding that perhaps it really was time to at least try and go to sleep. He felt like, maybe today, maybe after everything that had happened, everything that had changed... He could sleep. Maybe his life would start to change with Hannibal Lecter, and perhaps finding each other was what they had needed most. Maybe it would solve a few of their problems in life. Not all of them, but a few. Perhaps now he'd be able to sleep.

H: Did you tell her?

W: Yes

H: And?

W: She asked me if we were going to move in together because your home is so big.

H: Perhaps you will move in with me one day. Pack up everything one day and just come live with me. I can't say that I'd mind it. It gets lonely here. A huge empty home? It drives me mad.

W: Maybe someday we will. A 2 bedroom apartment is cozy, but small. Too small to breathe comfortably. I think that both of us would like to come live with you, just for that library. Christ, where did you even get that many books?

H: I collect them. I buy any book I think looks interesting. I read quite a lot as it is, and I plan on reading every single one of them when I'm too old to do anything else. Until then, I figure that there's too much to do. Too much to see in this world to spend it in books. Obviously, I still love books and plan on reading every book that I own before the day that I die... But why would I live in a fictional universe when there's so much to see in our own?

W: I don't know. I think that the world is too big and too confusing to try and understand, to try and see everything. If you're so curious that you're spending your life doing nothing but trying to see and do everything, you'll be going too fast. Books are a good part of life, I think. I don't think that you should be going 100 miles an hour, because you'll miss the good parts. If you try and see and understand everything in the world, then you're going to have to go so fast that you'll forget to see the simple things. I guess.

H: That's deep, William.

W: I'm getting tired and just pulling stuff out of my ass. I should probably go to sleep.

H: Perhaps you should.

W: Goodnight, Hannibal.

H: Goodnight, Will.

Snow and Cigarettes

Hannibal sat on the balcony, staring out into the streets. The whole world was covered in snow and ice today. After Will had gone to bed the night before, Hannibal had gone out to watch the stars, knowing that the same dust that created the wonders of the night sky was running through his veins. It had always calmed him down. From the universe he became, and when he died, he would rejoin the stars.

But when he went out, there were no stars in the night sky. Instead, it looked as if they were falling slowly to the ground, their cold light spreading across the ground and all around him. Snow. He couldn't say that he particularly liked snow, but that night, he felt like anything could be beautiful. He was seeing beauty in the world that he had not seen there before. As soon as he'd met William Graham, the world became a much brighter place.

It was about 8 in the morning now. The snow had stopped falling and now blanketed the ground. Cars were plowing through slowly, careful today. People on their ways to work, when Hannibal didn't have a single patient today. Hannibal had nothing to do today, which would drive him mad. Will would be teaching, and it would be irresponsible to start texting him in the middle of a lecture. So Hannibal would have to keep himself busy without the man that he was falling head over heels for. It was just a few hours, but it felt like a long time. A long time to go without talking to someone who he really cared about. And it seemed too fast and really stupid and unbelievably clingy and naive and...

It was raw.

That was the word. Their relationship was raw.

Both of them had grown so calloused over the years, and they both knew it. It wasn't some secret. Neither of them knew how to fully comprehend their own emotions. They were pushing these feelings away because making sense of them was too hard, too painful. They became harder than rock. Harder than diamond.

With what Garrett Jacob Hobbs did to Will, Will had been so hurt and so broken that he'd shut out everything except one thing: Abigail Hobbs. Abigail had obviously been his saving grace, the light of his life. But he had shut everyone else out for months. He'd been an abuse survivor, he'd been an outcast... And everything had made him hardened. It had caused his skin to turn to stone, his heart to build walls of ice around it. Everything that he did, whether it was staying at home for days at a time or not speaking or only working a couple of days a week or giving in to every struggle that his autism brought him... He didn't try to get out, to act normal, to be happy. He just cocooned himself inside of the four walls of his new apartment, keeping himself safe and sane inside the bubble of the routine that he had created for himself. His heart was freezing, and it screamed one thing. It was his hardened, cold heart screaming at him, telling him to protect himself. Don't move out of your comfort zone again. You'll just get hurt again.

Hannibal was the other side of the same coin. The opposite, but in a mirror image sort of way. Hannibal had been searching his whole life for something, though he didn't know what he was searching for. It was an unquenchable thirst for knowledge, a quest to have the world on a string tied around his finger. He was endlessly curious about life. And normally, this would cause someone to be more open to the world. But every time he had opened up, it had gotten him hurt. He'd left his home, come to America, and in return, he lost his sister. He made himself a life here and lost his family's love, leaving him with no one. He gave into his sexual fantasies, but he'd still been left alone, without anyone to love. So he stopped letting himself get too attached. Part of him had been so desperate for love again, after Bedelia, but he knew that it would hurt if someone came too close. So while he hoped desperately for someone to stumble into his life, he didn't pursue anyone. He always felt different than everyone else. He felt unique, but alone. Like the king of the mountain, subjects below him, never being able to touch his creation... Alone. That loneliness, the ability to feel alone in a room full of people that he should've loved, caused him to turn to stone. I'm too different, I will never be like them. They will only cause me pain.

Skin hard as rock, bones as strong as diamond. They'd never let themselves be vulnerable after what had happened to them. They were both as hard and cold as ice itself, like their hearts had become nothing but a heap of coal, sitting dormant and immobile in their chests. They were statues, ice sculptures that could never be melted.

Until they looked into each other's eyes.

Hannibal knew the moment that he laid eyes on that man. It was like looking into a mirror. It was like they had known each other for years. And for the first time in his life, it felt like he wasn't alone anymore. It was like he'd found the king he'd been searching for. The person who was on the same level as he was. It was like Hannibal didn't have to be afraid of being hurt, and neither did Will. It was like there was this great amount of trust there. He wasn't sure how or why, but it was like William was the other half of his soul.

So why, exactly, would he ever think about hurting Will Graham? He wouldn't. Never. He would never risk losing that trust, that other half of his soul. He was going to cherish and protect Will with all that he had. He was stupidly in love with William Graham, or he would be. He knew that this relationship was going to last for a lifetime. Will Graham was his soul mate, and Hannibal Lecter had no doubt in his mind about that.

But goddammit, waiting for a text was agony.

He stood up, gathering his tea off of the metal table that he kept on his balcony. He turned toward the sliding glass door and loosened his scarf, tossing it on the back of his stuffed recliner, the recliner he very rarely used. He liked it, but he much preferred sitting in his grandfather's old rocking chair, or in anything that made him feel classy. He was pretentious and had no doubt about it. Nor did he care. He had a taste for the finest things in life. He'd grown up wealthy, and he'd kept the taste.

He ruffled a hand through his hair as he started downstairs, taking two steps at a time. He hurried, trying to get downstairs as quickly as possible... But he was stopped in his tracks as the pain shot violently up his leg. He let out a cry of pain, hands clutching at the wall as he fell against it, unable to hold himself up. He bit down hard on his lip for a moment, so hard

that he swore he drew blood. He inhaled hard and closed his eyes, flashes of light burning behind his eyelids as he struggled to hold himself together. It felt like a bullet was shooting straight through the muscle. Christ, it hurt. He inhaled sharp and loud, trying not to scream. His fingers dug into the wall until his nails, the nails that had been perfectly manicured and polished. God, it hurt.

He groaned and slid against the wall, pressing his back against it and leaning on his left leg, the good leg. Jesus, what was this? He slowly inhaled, sucking in as much oxygen as he could. He was a doctor. He'd been a surgeon before becoming a psychiatrist. He should've known how to handle it. He should have known how to handle it. How to alleviate the pain. But right then, as it was shooting through his leg... Jesus, it hurt so badly. He closed his eyes, counting off, knowing that he had to do something to distract him... Inhale... Exhale... Inhale... Exhale...

And it was gone.

Just as quickly as it had come, it was gone. He closed his eyes for a moment, recollecting himself quickly. It was just age. His bones deteriorating, his body breaking down as death approached. It wasn't a good thing, but nothing to worry about. He was getting older. He was 50 now. He wasn't exactly young anymore. He had to get used to the fact that he was going to have to deal with joint pain and muscle aches. It wasn't something to worry about.

He sighed and pushed himself back off of the wall, hurrying back down the stairs. He took it a bit slower, still aching with the phantom of the pain that had plagued him. He hurried down the few remaining steps and darted toward his harpsichord. He wasn't one to run most of the time, especially when he was trying to look posh or elegant or something of the sort. But when no one was around, he raced everywhere because he knew that he'd not be alone for long. His parents would beat him so often, and just one wrong move got him hurt. So when they weren't home, he did whatever he wanted to get done with astonishing speed. He had to get it done before they came back and hurt him again. And it was a habit that he'd taken with him from childhood.

There was nothing to worry about now, of course. No unwanted guests, no one coming to hurt him for no reason at all. It was just him and his harpsichord today. He always found such joy in that instrument. It was just a joyful sound to hear, and joy was seldom found in this world. Or, at least, that was how it had felt once upon a time, before he'd met Will Graham.

He slid onto the bench and grabbed his cell phone, which was sitting on top of the beautiful instrument. He clicked the button, the screen quickly coming to life with... No new text messages.

Dammit.

Hannibal swore to himself, hoping that something had happened that his lecture had gotten cancelled. The school burning down, the whole class catching a deadly strain of ebola, something. He just wanted something to get William Graham out of class so that they could talk, and Hannibal could keep him all to himself...

He sighed and plucked the keys of the harpsichord, trying to find some sort of inspiration in the music. But as he sat there, his eyes stayed on the phone, desperately praying that it would buzz. That it would ring. Desperately willing it to light up and display Will's contact name, showing the text message. He was so distracted that even the harpsichord couldn't make him focus. He just wanted William, no one else. He didn't want to do anything else that day. It was like being on drugs. In his presence, nothing else seemed to matter, and it felt like he was practically flying. But the moment that he was gone, he crashed. It hurt not being with him, hurt not being next to him... And every moment was spent thinking about him.

Will...

He sighed and stood up, deciding that focusing on the harpsichord, or anything for that matter, wasn't going to happen. He walked toward the door, deciding that he needed to get out. He didn't care about the cold, didn't care about the snow. He just needed to clear his head. He needed to walk out of the house and get into the fresh air. He just needed to think about something else - anything else - other than Will Graham. He was going to drive himself insane if he didn't clear his head.

He shrugged on his winter coat and second scarf, the ones that he kept on the coat rack in the lobby of his home. It wasn't really so much a lobby as it was the main floor of his home, since he kept his practice and his home in the same place. He didn't leave often anymore, not since Bedelia left. Nowhere to go that he wouldn't be reminded of her. He went out for morning walks, went out for breakfast when he wasn't in the mood to cook for himself, occasionally went to see the orchestra, when they were playing. But aside from that, he only left his home when he needed to.

But today he was going out, if only for a walk. Just something to get his mind away from Will. He shrugged on his coat and his scarf, grabbing his phone and putting it into his phone, just in case. Just in case he let out early, or sent just a quick text. Something. Anything. He couldn't help himself. He was pathetic. Half of him was telling him to stop getting so whipped over a boy. He had never been this clingy with any of his other various lovers. Of course, he liked to know where they were most of the time, and get frequent texts from them. Not because he was a stalker, but because they had been in a BDSM relationship, and because it was part of the agreement. It was a mutual agreement that either of them could back out of at any time, and it was made abundantly clear. But he had never been so clingy, and half of him was kicking himself for it. But half of him didn't give a damn, because at least now he wasn't going to miss a second of time spent talking to Will Graham.

He stepped out onto the snow-covered pavement, smiling to himself as it crunched beneath his feet. How satisfying. He started down the street, taking a cigarette out of his pocket, lighting it quickly and sitting it between his teeth. He had done it so many times that it felt natural. He'd reduced his habit to once a day, but it was hard to keep it at that. His father was a smoker, and at the age of 11, he'd picked up his first cigar. He was a heavy smoker for years, but decided to try to preserve his life when Mischa died. But even still, smoking was his nasty little habit.

He let a puff of smoke escape his throat, floating into the freezing air as he walked, swaggering down the pavement, not going too fast, going nowhere in particular. He breathed

in the air, which was now somewhere between smokey and fresh. It was the smell of the city, a smell that he'd still not grown fully accustomed to. He'd grown up in Denmark in the 70's, and while it was a city, it seemed far more quaint. Less intimidating. Everyone knew everyone, and everyone had a sense of class where he'd grown up. He'd been in a rich part of town, of course, but... Even still. He would never get used to this city.

But there was at least one thing keeping him here now.

Perhaps, one day, he'd take Will to his home. The place where he grew up. Perhaps they'd hide away in the long-abandoned mansion and sleep where he had slept as a child. Perhaps they'd find the remnants of his backyard city, the place where he'd grown up ruling over a small plastic kingdom... Perhaps they could be happy there together.

But asking Will to run away with him was inappropriate right now, obviously. While Hannibal was confident that they'd be together until the end of time, he also knew that going too fast was ridiculous. They'd kissed after a few hours of knowing each other, and Hannibal had lost his composure like a horny teenager and had to disappear, only to be as indiscreet as possible as he screamed his name. It was so ridiculous. He needed to slow down. He had to make himself take things slower. Or else he'd end up scaring Will away.

Suddenly, his phone buzzed in his pocket. A smile instantly crossed over his lips as he slipped his cigarette back into his mouth, stopping in his tracks on the pavement just to check. He slid his hand into his coat pocket and grabbed the cell phone, seeing the lit-up screen. It was a bit hard to see because the sun was shining today, making the scream near impossible to see. But he could see it well enough.

William: Good morning, Dr. Lecter.

Hannibal smiled brighter than he should've. It felt juvenile and stupid, like he was some middle-schooler, pining after a boy. But in that moment, all he cared about was the text. He didn't care how ridiculous he seemed or sounded. He just wanted to talk to Will Graham.

H: Good morning, William.

W: Just Will

H: Just Hannibal

W: You first

H: I don't think so, William.

W:What are you doing today?

H: Currently, I'm walking. It's freezing and it's lovely. Reminds me of home. Aside from that, I do plan on reading a bit this evening. It's going to be a lazy evening tonight. Perhaps you and Abigail can come have dinner with me?

W:It'd be a delight, but, unfortunately, I'm not sure that I can.

H: Am I too intrusive if I ask you why?

W: No. It's just that I need to keep routine. Breaking it can be... Too much. I need schedule. I need warning. I'm sorry. I just... I get overloaded when I don't have a schedule, and I'm not sure I'm ready to sacrifice my mental health for a dinner.

H: No, I completely understand. Spontaneity isn't for everyone. Autism can make things like that a struggle. I understand, William. I'll just have to wait until Monday.

H: Distance makes a heart grow fonder. The longer we wait, the better it will feel to see you again.

W: Well, I am certainly looking forward to seeing you again. I'm sorry again. I just don't think I can handle it today.

H: No need to apologize, William

W: My students are starting to get annoyed with me, so I need to go. I'll talk to you soon.

H: Talk to you again soon, William.

Reality

"What is reality?" Will inquired, leaning on his podium.

A giant screen was hung behind him. Slightly below that, directly behind him, was a chalkboard. In front of him were at least a hundred kids, perhaps more. 18, 19, 20, 21, 22... Though the majority of them were just psychology majors who would drop out after a week. Since the second semester had just started, he had a crop of new students, considering that this class was only a semester long. This class would be thinning out fast, not that he minded. The less, the easier. Everyone wanted to major in psychology at some point. It was part of the human condition. Everyone thirsted for knowledge about how the mind worked. They wanted to know how the human brain worked, what made people do what they did. People were desperate to know how it worked. Motivation. Reasons. Why we do what we do. But, while most people had a curiosity, few actually completed the course.

Hands shot up from around the room, these kids all having some form of answer. He glanced around, trying to pick out faces from the crowd. He didn't like looking directly at people if he could avoid it, but teaching wasn't so bad. As much as he hated talking to people, he didn't mind talking at them. He let his finger wander from student to student for a moment before landing on one. A kid with long, curly hair and a stubbly beard. Couldn't have been older than 19. He wore a tan button down over an orange t-shirt, jeans, and about a dozen bracelets. Yeah, this kid wasn't going to be staying for more than a couple of weeks. Will gave it a month. Tops.

"Hippie guy." Will called, leaning back on his podium and shoving his hands into his pockets.

He was wearing the same suit that he always wore. It was cheap, and he'd had it for years, not to mention how comfortable it was. Beneath his jacket was a flannel that he wore most of the time, and a tie. An uncomfortable one, at that. He didn't like having to dress up for work, and if it were up to him, he'd be in a flannel and jeans. But the college required that he wear a suit, so that's what he did. Unfortunately.

"Observable universe?" He answered.

"Well, that answer might fly in the physics department, but this is neuroscience. Does anyone have the brains to give me an answer relating to the brain?" Will replied, gesturing to the board where all of the notes and diagrams were written down.

More hands shot up. He looked around, eyes eventually landing on a girl who was sitting in the front row. She had long, dark hair and a t-shirt that was particularly low cut that had the words "STIMULUS PACKAGE" written on the front. She didn't look too different than Abigail, in all honesty. Abigail had a slighter frame, was considerably less sexual about her appearance... But they looked like they could perhaps be sisters in another life.

"Ironic t-shirt." Will called out.

"Reality is exactly what we see and hear, instead of what we fantasize about, dream, or, you know, hallucinate." She answered quickly.

"Ahh... Hallucination. That's an answer I would've expected from Hippie Guy. Sex, drugs, and rock-and-roll, am I right?"

The class chuckled at his remark, which gave him a sense of accomplishment. Typically, he wouldn't have interacted with the class. He would've talked, given his lecture, and dismiss. That was just his routine. However, he was in a particularly good mood today, and decided to throw the class a bone by actual interaction. Teachers were typically expected to do that kind of thing, so why not?

"Okay, now here's something that's really going to alter your consciousness. Reality is a figment of your imagination."

A few puzzled looks from around the room came his way, but most of them were simply intrigued. This was something that he rarely got. An intrigued audience. His lectures were fascinating for the most part, at least to him. Neuroscience had been a different kind of special interest. One he just passed off as liking his job. But he studied it relentlessly when he got the chance. Will had written 8 books, though only 4 had been published. All of it had happened before Garrett, before he stopped writing for the most part. But before that, he'd written 8 books on neuroscience and how the brain worked. He'd taken a position as a journalism teacher that he'd been offered because of it. And that had started him down the path that he'd been on. But before it all happened, before the abuse, before the rape, before everything... Neuroscience was a special interest. And he was lucky to get this job, he admitted. But he just talked at them. He didn't interact because socializing was overwhelming, hard. But today... Today he was interacting, and he had to admit, he was proud of himself. Perhaps it was Dr. Lecter.

Who was he kidding? It was definitely Dr. Lecter.

But he knew that if he lingered too long on Dr. Lecter, his imagination would run wild. He'd start thinking of their conversations, where their relationship was headed, how life was going to turn out for them. Before he knew it, he'd be so far gone into his thought that he'd have to have a student snap him out of it. It's not like that hadn't happened before. He'd lose track of what he was saying because he made a strange association and lost track of where he was going with it. It was a strange thing when you could jump from thinking about how pleased you were about the intrigued looks on your students' faces to your budding relationship, but it wasn't unlike him. He shook his head and turned back to his students, hopping back on track with where he was going.

"Who here hasn't woken up breathless from a nightmare and thought 'oh thank god it's just a dream'? That's because the neurochemical impulses fired when we're dreaming, or fantasizing, or hallucinating are indistinguishable from the ones banging around inside of our skulls when we actually experience those events. So if what we perceive is often wrong, how can we ever know what's real and what isn't?"

Will turned from the class and to the desk that sat behind the podium. He hopped up on the desk, letting his legs swing back and forth as he pulled out his cell phone. A few puzzled

glances darted around the room, as if asking what he was doing. But he was making a point. He turned on and typed out a message quickly, pressing send within seconds.

H: Good morning, William.

W: Just Will

H: Just Hannibal

W: You first

H: I don't think so, William.

W:What are you doing today?

H: Currently, I'm walking. It's freezing and it's lovely. Reminds me of home. Aside from that, I do plan on reading a bit this evening. It's going to be a lazy evening tonight. Perhaps you and Abigail can come have dinner with me?

W:It'd be a delight, but, unfortunately, I'm not sure that I can.

H: Am I too intrusive if I ask you why?

W: No. It's just that I need to keep routine. Breaking it can be... Too much. I need schedule. I need warning. I'm sorry. I just... I get overloaded when I don't have a schedule, and I'm not sure I'm ready to sacrifice my mental health for a dinner.

H: No, I completely understand. Spontaneity isn't for everyone. Autism can make things like that a struggle. I understand, William. I'll just have to wait until Monday.

H: Distance makes a heart grow fonder. The longer we wait, the better it will feel to see you again.

W: Well, I am certainly looking forward to seeing you again. I'm sorry again. I just don't think I can handle it today.

H: No need to apologize, William

W: My students are starting to get annoyed with me, so I need to go. I'll talk to you soon.

H: Talk to you again soon, William.

Will couldn't help but smile. Christ, he wondered if he seemed clingy as he felt. He had a nasty habit of getting too clingy too fast, and that made him want to put distance between them, so he wouldn't ruin the relationship by acting clingy, desperate. It was ridiculous. He wasn't lying about not being able to handle it because he'd already talked and socialized far too much in one day, but even so... The whole time he stared at the phone, he was smiling like an idiot.

"Professor Graham? What are you doing?" Ironic T-Shirt inquired.

Will's head popped up as he leaned back on his hands, dropping his phone onto the desk beside him. He looked back to the classroom, scanning their faces quickly. They were all looking at him with puzzled faces, like why would someone who was supposed to be giving a lecture be texting someone in the middle of class?

"I'm proving a point. You see, reality isn't fixed. It's not a definite, sure thing. My reality is different than yours. I'm sitting on my desk, texting my boyfriend, ignoring the class in front of me. He just asked me out for dinner, and I had to decline because I have your papers to grade. So they better be worth my time. But this is not your reality. Perhaps you're staring at a teacher who is too busy texting his boyfriend to give the rest of his lecture. Or perhaps you hardly notice because you're texting some girl beneath the desk. Maybe you're just barely staying awake after pulling an all-nighter. Or, perhaps, you're just waiting to get out of this class. This is all reality, but not everyone's reality. So is reality really just what's observable? Or is it just our brains stitching together some story? How do we know what's real... And what's just in our heads?"

There was a short silence, like they were trying to take in what he'd just said. He wasn't getting to deep into anything yet, considering that it was still their first week back. But that didn't mean that they were getting out of homework.

"If you don't know who I am, I've written books in the past. I'm a writer, whether it's fiction or nonfiction. So I want you to use your brains, considering that this is a neuroscience class. But I want you to use your dorsolateral prefrontal cortex to come up with a lie. Or better known as a story. I want a short story of no less than 2000 words. Give me a character who is put in a situation in which the lines between reality and fiction are blurred. And no, you may not just use the story line of the Mara Dyer trilogy or from the movie Oculus. I have a teenage daughter who has an addiction to all things movies and books. She will know if you're stealing a plot. I expect it done by next Friday, fully spell-checked and edited. Alright. Class dismissed."

There wasn't a second of hesitation before the sound of books and chairs and feet against tile started up, becoming slightly overwhelming to his senses. He gulped down hard and turned away, closing his eyes at the noise. He hated the noise, but he held it together. He'd gotten used to it over the years, and it was still better than what it had been like when he was teaching at a high school.

The noise died down quickly as they filed out of the room. He didn't have to give another lecture until after lunch, so he had a few hours to kill. He walked around his desk and kicked his feet up as he slid into his chair. He grabbed his phone, fully intending on focusing on nothing other than Dr. Hannibal Lecter...

Until he noticed the one person who absolutely did not belong there.

He forced back a groan as he looked up. Jack Crawford was standing there. He was an... Acquaintance. Jack had worked with Garrett before, but Will hardly cared. He just wanted to sit down, unwind, talk to Hannibal...

Jack was a bigger guy. He was heavier set; not obese or anything, just not thin. He had dark skin and short, cropped curls on his head. He was about 6'0, but be looked closer to 5'10 or

5'11, just because his chubbiness balanced him out a little bit. He was wearing a nice suit and had his hands stuffed into his pockets, studying over Will...

"Mr. Graham." He said, strolling over.

Will picked up his phone and hoped that maybe he'd just go away. Of course, that didn't happen. Jack wasn't one to leave him alone easily. He didn't know Jack well, but Will could read him like an open book. Besides... Their first meeting hadn't exactly been... Good. Will didn't want to admit it, but he couldn't lie. He was still pretty bitter.

"How long have you been standing in the back of my classroom?" Will muttered, not paying much attention.

"Long enough. That was a good lecture." Jack complimented.

"Thanks." Will muttered.

Jack sighed, leaning over the desk. Will continued to scroll through his phone, just clicking through his messages with Hannibal, trying to decide what to say. To be honest, Hannibal was the only person that he cared to talk to right then. He wanted to talk to him... No one else. Just Hannibal Lecter. Jack was... Dull. Well, perhaps that was a rude thing to say. But he was easy to read. Will could get a read of his personality just by looking at him. However, actually talking and understanding his body language then? That was hard. Stupidly hard.

"How have you been, Will?" Jack inquired, leaning forward.

"Sorry, who are you again?" Will replied, trying to think of something to send to Hannibal.

"Jack Crawford. I used to work with your -"

"I know, I was just hoping that would make you go away."

"I know you don't like me, Will, but..."

"I never said that I didn't like you. I just have someone on the other end of this phone that I like a lot more."

"Boyfriend?"

"Boyfriend."

"So you're moving on?"

"Kind of."

"I see. When I found out what happened between you and Garrett, I was... Shocked. I knew that he wasn't the best guy, but I never thought that he'd..."

"Rape his own husband? Yeah, I know. I didn't think so either. Which one of us is the fucking sociopath now?"

Will glanced up at Jack for a moment. He was staring down at him, eyes intent on finding something. When Will had first met Jack, it hadn't been a pleasant meeting. He and Garrett had just gotten engaged, and Jack had come over for dinner. Apparently, Will had been a little too cold... Hadn't made a good impression. Jack eventually had enough and stood up, asking Garrett to follow him. Will could hear the angry whispers through the wall. *"He's a fucking sociopath, Garrett."*

They'd never really talked a lot after that. Will was still bitter over it. All these years, Will had tried so hard to learn how to feel. How to behave like a normal person. Like a good person. But no. One meeting and Jack had marked him off as a sociopath. It still made him angry to think about. He knew that he'd not exactly been kind, but he hadn't been mean either. Not intentionally, anyways. And that bastard...

"I'm sorry, Will."

"Me too."

Jack looked down at his hands in shame. Will just flipped through his phone, pretending to be busy, still hoping that Jack would just leave. What was he even doing here anyways? Surely he had better places to be than pestering him over a rape that happened 6 months ago. Will was healing. He didn't need Garrett's old friend to come and open old wounds. He just wanted to get Garrett out of his mind for good. He didn't want to think about it anymore.

"So... I see you've hitched your horse to a teaching post then... I also understand that it's difficult for you to be social."

"Well, I'm just talking at them, I'm not listening to them. It's not social."

"Seemed pretty social to me. Hippie guy."

"But I don't even know the kid's name. I was in a good mood today, so I decided to make it a little more... Interactive, I guess. That was, until you decided to come in here and dig at old scars, thanks."

"I'm sorry, Will."

"Graham. Professor Graham, if you would."

"What, we're not on a first name basis?"

"Never were, Crawford."

Jack looked away for a moment. Will sat down his phone and looked up at him, deciding that perhaps he needed to fulfill Jack's whims, whatever they may be, for him to go away. He'd tried being cold, tried being rude... Now he supposed that there was nothing else to do but interact, no matter how unpleasant.

"I came here for a reason... Where you you fall on the spectrum, Will?" He inquired, looking down.

"Oh, what now, you're a psychiatrist? Trying to evaluate me? Well, let me tell you now, you won't like me when I'm psychoanalyzed."

"I already don't like you much right now. I have sympathy for you, but I don't like you. Don't confuse it. But I'm not trying to psychoanalyze you. I'm trying to figure out how you're going to react to what I'm going to say."

"Fine. I'm not a sociopath."

"What are you, then?"

"My horse is hitched to a post closer to Aspergers and autistics than narcissists and sociopaths. So there. You're safe, if that's what you're concerned about. I'm not going to murder you, or Garrett, or anyone else. I'm autistic, not a murderer."

"Well... Um... Garrett was reported missing two days ago. He didn't show up to work. We don't know where he is, but we got a warrant to get into his house and..."

"And?"

"It was trashed. Bottles were everywhere. Maps were strewn up on the walls. We checked his hard drive and... He was looking for you, Will. We think that he's coming for you and Abigail. You might want to consider locking your doors at night."

And the world came crashing down around him.

Eve and the Serpent

Chapter Notes

I fucking suck at smut. Leave me alone, I'm asexual.

William: I think I need to cancel our date.

Hannibal had been sitting by the fire all night. He'd not gotten a text from Will since that morning, and it had been agony waiting for him. He'd tried his best not to seem clingy, but it hadn't been enough to stop him from sending a couple of texts. But none had gotten a reply... Until then.

Hannibal had been a bit too quick to pick up his phone the moment that it buzzed. He scanned over the words... Then again. And again.

It seemed childish. He hardly knew Will Graham... But as he sat there, he felt his heart start to crumble. Like everything inside of him was breaking. This was so childish. He wasn't in love with Will Graham or anything... They'd kissed. It was a kiss. But...

What happened?

They'd been getting on so well. Kissing. Talking. Texting. Flirting. Joking. Everything. Everything was perfect... At least to him... What had he done wrong? He felt a wave of nausea hit him like a storm as he read over the text. Again and again. He jumped to the worst possible conclusions, and he knew that it was probably just a misunderstanding, but god what if it wasn't? He bit down on his lip and typed back a reply.

Hannibal: May I ask why?

W: There are just some personal things going on right now that I need to take care of. I don't think a relationship is a good idea.

H: So are you cancelling our date or postponing it?

W: I don't know. I think cancellation is the safe option right now. Sorry, Dr. Lecter.

H: Is there anything that I can help with?

W: No. This is cruel of me, but it's not something I can talk about to someone I like.

H: What about your psychiatrist?

W: You're not my psychiatrist. I talked to Abigail. I don't think that we'll be coming back. I'm sorry.

H: Did I do something wrong? Was I too sexual? Because I can stop. I will stop. I'll do whatever, please, just talk to me.

W: It's not your fault. I promise.

H: Will I ever see you again?

W: I don't think so. I'm sorry. Goodbye, Hannibal.

That was when the teacup shattered.

He threw it against the wall, not sure whether he should be heartbroken or enraged with himself. How could he let himself get close to someone he hardly knew? What did he do to drive him away? What did he do wrong this time? First it was Bedelia, and now it was Will... Was he truly destined to be alone forever?

He didn't know. He just stood there and stared at the wall...

Why?

What had he done wrong?

He just stood there for a long time. He wasn't sure how long, but it felt like hours. He was standing there, shaking... What happened? His chest was heaving and he wasn't sure if he was angry or if he was heartbroken or somewhere in between. He just knew that everything hurt now and he didn't want anything but Will.

But he couldn't have Will now. He'd done something wrong. He'd fucked something up. He'd hurt Will somehow and pushed him away after one day. This was ridiculous. He shouldn't hurt so much after a few kisses, a few text messages. But it was killing him inside as he stood there. He had fallen in love with Will Graham in a matter of moments, and it was so bizarre and insane...

Jesus. This was stupid and childish, but he couldn't help himself. It hurt. It felt like a knife had been burrowed deep into his heart and twisted... He just stood there, blank faced now, unable to form proper thoughts, feelings, emotions...

He grabbed his phone and typed in her number, then hit call.

"Alana Bloom-Verger, how may I help you?" She answered professionally.

"I'm frustrated. Angry, sad, I don't know. I need to get out my feelings. I need to take it out on someone. Are you a willing participant, Alana?" He growled, pacing across the floor.

"You want me to have rough sex with you?"

"Are you a willing participant?"

"I guess so. I need to call Margot and tell her. She took the boys to her ranch for the weekend, so I need to make sure it's cool with her. But... Yeah, give me half an hour. Handcuffs?"

"Make it 20 minutes. And no handcuffs tonight. I don't want anything kinky tonight. I just want to fuck. Hard. You're mine to control tonight."

"Wow, okay. Yeah, that's cool. I'll be there."

"You remember the safe word?"

"Am I going to need it?"

"Perhaps. You'll think of me every time you move for the next week if I'm allowed to have my way. I need to take out some of this rage. Or pain. Or whatever it is."

"Okay, wow, that's... Kind of hot. But yeah, I remember. I'll be there in 20."

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him, completely nude, literally waiting for him to fuck her to his heart's content.

He studied her over for a moment, a small smirk crossing over his lips, as if saying that she'll suffice. Her breasts were fuller than they had been when they were in college, and he was pretty sure that they'd feel very nice cupped beneath his hands. Nipples were erect, though he wasn't sure if it was because she was aroused or because of the cold. He could smell her scent from feet away, confirming that she was just as pleased to see him as he was to see her. Her black hair was sitting elegantly on her pretty little head, like it had been fixed with specific intent. Too bad that he'd be the one to mess it up, pulling and tugging...

Holding the door open with his foot, he reached forward and pulled her in. He grabbed her by the coat and pulled her in quickly, not waiting for a moment. He kicked the glass door closed and shoved her out of view, knowing that any passing car could easily see them where they were standing. He grabbed her roughly and slammed her against the wall next to the door, hidden from view of anyone else.

His hands curled around her wrists and pinned them high above her head, as if holding her captive. His eyes studied over her for a long moment before he rammed his lips against hers, pushing her hard up against the wall. He let his fingers drift down her arms, kissing her roughly, not daring to let her go. If he let her go, she would leave too. She'd be no better than Will.

Will....

Oh, how he would've rather had Will there, pressing up against him, pulling him close, kissing him as passionately and violently as he could... But no. It was Alana. A married woman who he didn't really care all that much about. She was... A friend with benefits. Nothing more, nothing less. But God he wished it was Will.

He felt himself growing harder, though not quite there yet. He pulled one hand from her arms, cupping one large hand against both of her wrists to keep her from moving them. His other hand drifted downward, under her coat and onto her fully exposed breast, playing with the nipple for a moment. They were hard and erect under his palm, which brought a small smile to his lips as he continued kissing her. Yes, they were nice...

He pulled away after a moment, the taste of her lips lingering in his mouth. She smiled up at him mischievously, like she was just as excited about what this night had in store as he was... Or, as he was supposed to be.

"Good evening, Hannibal." She smirked, staring up at him from beneath him.

"You will not call me that tonight. You will refer to me only as 'Dr. Lecter' or 'Sir'. Is that understood?" He replied, becoming more and more dominant as he stood above her.

"Yes sir."

"Good girl."

He grabbed the hems of the jacket roughly and tore them off of her shoulders, leaving her completely bare. He grabbed her hand violently and dragged her quickly to the spare room on the first floor. He had two spare rooms on the first floor, as well as his play room. But he wouldn't be beating or whipping her tonight. He'd just be fucking. Plain and simple. Fucking until the pain went away.

He pulled her into a spare room and pinned her against the door as it slammed shut behind him. He kissed her roughly again, fingers all over her body. He pulled his lips from hers and found them on her neck. He sucked against her neck, sucking the skin, leaving his mark there. She would be remembering him for weeks to come every time she looked in the mirror. Every single time she would go to put on her makeup, she would remember him. She was going to remember him.

Pressing a hand up against her breast, fingers playing against the nipple... Hmm... He let it drift down again, fingers trailing over her skin so lightly that she felt like a ghost... His thumb trailed over her hip bones, drifting downward... His fingers ran over her skin, once silky smooth but now starting to become a bit stubbly, like she'd not shaved in a couple of days. He didn't really mind. He liked pubic hair sometimes. He wasn't picky.

His finger roamed to her slit, exploring slowly... She was so wet, wet enough to soak his finger with barely even touching her. He could smell her... It was going straight to his cock, causing him to get as hard as a rock. He pulled his lips away from her neck and looked up at her. She was staring down at him, head leaning to the side, eyes trained on him, begging him to give it to her with nothing but her eyes... Like the little slut she was.

His fingers spread open her labia with his index finger and his ring finger, running his middle finger up through her, slowly grazing over her clit. He felt her shudder beneath his touch as he rolled her clit between his fingers like he was some sort of pro at this. Which he supposed he was. She was pressing up toward him, begging to be touched, but no. He was going to tease her, bring her close but not close enough...

"Hannibal, please." She moaned.

He didn't give it a second thought. He pulled his fingers away from her clit and shoved two up into her vagina quickly, roughly, causing her to almost scream. Surprise, pain, whatever. She had signed up for this, had known what she was in for the moment that she came into his home.

"You will address me only as Dr. Lecter, or Sir. Is. That. Understood?"

"Yes sir, I'm sorry sir!" She replied, moaning like a little slut as she begged.

He pulled his finger away, wiping it off on her bare stomach. He straightened himself out and grabbed her by the hair. He looked down at her as she bent to his every whim, staring up at him with this eyes that were somewhere between pleading and teasing. Begging to be touched, but still trying to keep this composure, letting him know that he wasn't going to be in full control. That she still had her free will.

He just held her by the hair and shoved her down to her knees. Her hair was too straight, too long. If he had it his way, this would not be Alana Bloom. This would be Will Graham at his feet... Or perhaps he wouldn't be at his feet. Perhaps he would treat Will with more care. Will was a virgin, after all. Perhaps he'd be far more kind and caring, more protective over his poor William. But Will wasn't here, and Will would never be here, and Will would never love him the way that he wished he would... So he had Alana. His fuckbuddy. The person that he could use whenever he pleased, as long as it was consensual. She was there for him to fuck whenever he felt the need, the urge... It was like an arrangement, he supposed. As long as he didn't keep her away too many nights out of the week, and as long as she was free...

She undid his pants slowly, building the tension. Her fingers trailed the outline of his cock through his pants, causing him to grow harder under her fingertips. He let out a shudder of a breath as she pulled down his zipper and slid off his pants, letting him step out of them as she tossed them to the other side of the room. She quickly followed suit with his underwear, his cock growing stiffer as she slowly undressed him, fingers grazing over his body... By the time he was completely bare, he was as hard as a rock.

"Hmm... Always did love this." She muttered as her fingers wrapped around his shaft. She pulled up slowly, jerking him off for a moment, dragging his foreskin beneath her fingers. It slowly rolled up above the head of his cock, where precum was now starting to build. He held in a soft groan, curling his hands into fists. She always knew how to pull him around, make him moan and cry out when she wanted to... But he didn't feel like giving her the satisfaction tonight. He wanted sex. He wanted to be in full control of another human being. Just for the time being.

She was pulling at his foreskin, dragging it up and back, over the head and back, the precum spreading out over his shaft... There was a lot of it at this point. But he still felt relatively numb. Not physically - he could feel every bit of that - but emotionally... Usually, even if it was just the hormones in his brain flaring from being caught in the throws of passion with a beautiful woman, he felt some sort of emotion. But right then, emotions were dulled. He couldn't get his mind off of Will Graham, and it felt so ridiculous, especially being so hurt from it all still...

"Open." He said simply, sternly.

She propped herself up on her knees so that she was positioned comfortably beneath him. She bit her lip for a moment, seduction dripping from her eyes, before pulling her lips back, granting him access. She licked her lips slowly as she looked up at him, his eyes sternly watching her. She took his shaft and positioned herself beneath him, wrapping her lips around his length. He held back a low groan as she moved back and forth, taking all of him in, to the point that the head of his cock grazed the back of her throat.

Her tongue pressed against his shaft, running it up and down as she sucked. He closed his eyes, trying to hold back his moans. He didn't feel like giving her that sort of satisfaction tonight. Though he did let out one small, short moan when she slipped her tongue between the head and his foreskin. But when she smirked, he immediately regained his composure.

After a few moments, he grew bored. He wasn't in control over her in the way that he needed right them. He needed to be rough with her, needed to take it out in a physical manifestation.

His cock now red and throbbing, soaked with her saliva and his precum, and he was painfully hard at this point. He needed her. He needed to be inside of her. Needed... Something.

"Where are your condoms?" She inquired, pulling away from him from a moment.

He didn't say anything. Just pointed toward the small desk next to her. She gave a small smirk and leaned back, pulling open the drawer, sifting around through it for a moment, and pulling on out. He reached out for it, ready to put it on himself, but she just raised a finger.

"I got it." She muttered, tearing it open.

She pulled the rubber over his cock, pulling it over the foreskin, all the way up the shaft. He hated wearing condoms. He was still going to wear them, obviously, but that didn't mean that he had to like it. She pulled it up before sticking it back in her mouth after a moment. It didn't feel as good like that, but he supposed that it didn't matter. He didn't want to risk any STI's or unwanted pregnancies. He didn't want kids yet. If ever.

"Hmm... Dr. Lecter... I want you to fuck me." She whispered to him, eyes following him with a sense of pleading. It was an act. He knew it was an act. But she was a good friend. She wanted to please him. Wanted to make sure that he got what he needed. Control.

He pulled her away from his cock and dragged her to her feet. He didn't hesitate as he shoved her onto the bed, climbing over top of her. He pinned her hands down to the bed for a moment, holding her down, putting most of his weight on her. She was staring up at him, head tilted back, neck fully exposed to him. There was a small place where he had sucked earlier that was starting to form a small bruise.

He settled himself above her, one leg propped between hers. She was wet, soaking. He rocked back and forth over her, rubbing in just the right places. He knew what he was doing. She closed her eyes as he pressed himself up against her, letting out a small moan as she tried desperately to push him closer to her, desperate for more... He could see her longing, see the need in every breath she took, hear it with every small moan.

"Dr. Lecter... Please..." She moaned, begging to be touched. He couldn't tell if this was real or not.

He pulled away from her for a moment, pulling his leg back and finding his way down between her legs. His fingers roamed over her skin, trailing lightly over her thighs, down her knees, to her shins... Some stubbly hairs had formed there, like it'd been a day or two since she'd shaved them. Not a big deal. His fingers were like ghosts, phantoms, just barely even there... Until he gripped down hard on her ankles and shoved them upward quickly, propping her legs open for him. He got a good view of her, every bit of her.

She had small ghosts of old stretchmarks, most likely from her kids. Same around her hips. They were small, barely noticeable. But up close, he could see every one. Her toenails were painted a bright red, but they looked worn now, like they needed a fresh coat. Her fingers were perfectly manicured, a perfect glossy red, and digging into the sheets beside her. Oh, she was desperate for his touch. The pink flesh between her legs was dripping now, almost begging to be touched. Part of him was tempted to lick it away, but no... Not now.

He inhaled slowly, taking in her scent. He ran a thumb over his bottom lip as he crouched in front of her, trying to decide what to do with her. He smirked to himself as he dragged his tongue over his bottom lip, letting it graze over his fingers before quickly pushing 3 fingers up inside of her. She let out a loud moan at the unexpected jolt, throwing her head back against the mattress. He pulled her forward as he slid off of the bed, on his knees in front of her. His fingers stayed inside of her as he pulled her toward him, and her breathing was becoming shallower now...

He pulled his fingers out slowly, painfully slow. His fingers curled in slightly, grazing where her g-spot would be as she let out a soft moan, more of a whimper than anything, really. He propped her up at the edge of the bed, situating himself between her legs. Her fingers were digging at the silk sheets again, biting at her lip... He slid his fingers back in again, the slickness of her body wrapping around his fingers, dripping down his knuckles...

He pulled back out. In. Out. In. Out. He pumped in and out with his fingers quickly, until she was panting, biting her lip, trying not to moan with pleasure. Her fingers were gripping desperately at the sheets below her, to a point where he was pretty sure that she was digging holes in them. Perhaps silk sheets weren't always the best for sex. But he didn't care. Not really.

"I want to hear you, Alana." He demanded, pushing his fingers up inside of her, as far as they would go.

His fingers curled up against her as he pulled out again, painfully slow, savoring each moment. She let out a soft moan, but it grew louder as he struck her g-spot. He smirked to himself as he pulled his fingers out of her body, wiping them off on the sheets beside her.

"Good girl." He muttered, standing up.

He closed his eyes. Perhaps, if he tried hard enough, he could make it so that Will Graham was lying in front of him instead. But he knew that Will would never be lying here. Will would never be next to him. Will was somewhere else, doing something else, thinking about someone else... Jesus, what had he done to hurt him? What mistake had he made?

He was so desperate, so broken, that he should've been doing anything else but this. But he couldn't help himself. He wanted Will so badly, so desperately, that it was breaking his heart just thinking about him. It was tearing him apart trying to figure out what he had done wrong, what he would have to do to make it better, to make it all go away.

"Hannibal..." Alana whispered, noticing that he was off inside of his own head again. His eyes shot open to find her now propped up on an elbow, legs now outstretched, no longer propped up, hanging lazily off of the bed. One hand was outstretched toward him, like she was trying to bring him back to reality, back to the present, back to the moment...

He snapped.

He snapped forward, pinning her arms back down onto the bed. She snapped backwards as well, now on the bed, stiff as a board, staring up at him with a certain amount of surprise in

her eyes. She inhaled sharply and held it, like she was afraid to let go. She stared up at him with wide eyes, chest inflated, hands curled into rigid fists...

"It's Dr. Lecter, Alana." He growled.

"Y-Yes sir." She stuttered.

His demeanor changed quickly, realizing that he had actually scared her. He'd hardly realized what he was doing before he'd done it. He'd snapped at her, pinned her down, and scared her with it. She had only been trying to help, after all. Trying to get him out of his own head, trying to bring him back to the present... He inhaled, letting the anger and the pain and the frustration melt away for a moment, knowing that he had to make sure that it was okay.

"Are you okay if I continue?" He inquired, getting quick consent before continuing.

"Yeah, you're fine... Scared me."

"I can continue, then?"

"Of course."

He let a small smirk cross over his lips for a moment, studying her over again. He tried to force every wandering thought out of his mind, just for right then. He pulled himself to his knees, propping himself up in front of her. He grabbed her legs and pulled them up, holding them into the air so that he had full access. She was lying back, hands holding onto the sheets, readying herself...

He wrapped his hand around his cock, hard and red and throbbing, desperate. He propped himself up on his knees, steadying himself in front of her, the head of his cock nearly touching her... The tension was growing in the air, causing him to start fidgeting. Jesus, he wished that this was Will. He wished that the person below him was Will Graham. He wanted Will so desperately, so frantically... Jesus Christ...

Will would be lying there beneath him. Ready, willing for the first time in his life. He wouldn't be afraid the way that he had been before. Hannibal would have made it seem okay... Made everything seem okay... Hannibal would've made him fall in love enough, tip him over, let him... He'd be lying there, that small smile on his lips, a smile that Hannibal had only barely caught glimpses of... His curls would be matted down to his head with sweat, and he'd look like he was on the cusp of orgasm, even before being touched...

He heard her groan beneath him, though it was less of a sexy groan and more of an annoyed one. She could sense the loss of focus again. He barely had time to process it as she hitched herself up, pressing herself up against him, getting his attention now. He took a deep breath and looked down at her again. He pressed himself up against her, dragging his cock down over her before reaching her vagina and plunging inside of her.

The sensation was intense, even through the condom. Her body wrapping around him, like swallowing him whole. He held back a small moan as he pushed himself up inside of her,

balls deep. She let out a small moan as he did, almost as if saying 'finally.' He closed his eyes and pulled back out after a moment, though not all the way. In... Out... In... Out...

He picked up speed as he thrust, closing his eyes. And suddenly, he wasn't fucking Alana anymore. It was Will now. He was lying there, letting out these low, short moans for him, lying there with his hands clutching the sheets, lying there... He was happy. And they were one. It was like they were two halves of the same soul, and now they were together again...

And when he opened them again, Will was gone. And it was Alana letting out those moans. It was Alana clutching the sheets as he picked up speed, faster and faster... He watched as she moved her hand away from the sheets and reached down, running her fingers over her clit, matching his speed and tempo as she rubbed. She let out a loud, long moan as she did so. He didn't mind. He wasn't here to please her right then, and she knew that well enough. He knew that the clitoris was usually what she needed to orgasm. If she wanted to get herself there, he didn't care.

He was breathing heavily now. He could feel himself drawing closer. He wasn't going to take long to come tonight. He didn't have the control. His head was so full of these conflicting emotions that composing himself to please her longer than a few minutes was going to be too hard. And she knew. She signed up for this. She knew how he was feeling. She knew it all.

But he supposed that she did deserve a little more than to be used. She left her home in the middle of the night for him. He pulled out, dick throbbing, balls tight and heavy, so ready to burst. He was going to cum soon. But he supposed he should make it last as long as he could. He dropped to his knees in front of her, pulling her up to him. He didn't hesitate, and was too far into his own mind to really care about what he was doing anymore.

He pressed his tongue up against her clit, now swollen and soaked and begging for touch. She let out a long moan at his touch. He inhaled slowly, taking in her scent, her taste. He didn't lie to himself. He didn't like the taste. No one did. But she deserved to feel good, deserved to get pleasure as well, so he did it. It was worth hearing her moans, one hand desperately grasping at the sheets, the other running through his hair. It was going straight to his cock, making him painfully hard. He could cum without being touched at this point...

"Yes... Oh god, right there, yes." She moaned out, tugging at his hair.

He licked a stripe up through her before standing up, grabbing her roughly by the wrists and lifting her up, her legs wrapping around his waist. He held her like she was weightless, which she almost was. She couldn't have weighed more than 130, 140... She was thin, made it work. He held her up, her skin pressing up against his. She was pressed up against the lower part of his stomach, above his pelvis. She was dripping, and he felt her fluids slowly dripping down his pelvis, making him painfully hard. God, he couldn't handle it much longer.

He slammed her against the wall, holding onto her tightly, not letting her feet touch the floor. He pushed himself up inside of him again, her pussy squeezing against his shaft, bringing him close, so close... Holding her tightly, careful not to drop her, he pressed his lips against her neck. She was moaning again, her voice making him even harder...

"FUCK!" She screamed.

His hip bone was rubbing up against her clit, stimulating her in every way... He felt a small smile of satisfaction tug at the corner of his lips as he pressed his lips against her neck, sucking on the skin, leaving another mark for her to remember him from...

Her nails were clawing at his back now, leaving long markings. He could feel them puncturing the flesh of his back, feel the blood beginning to perk up from his skin. He pushed himself up into her again, and he could feel her body tighten around him with each thrust, as if instinctively trying to pull him inside of her. He was panting now, trying to keep quiet, trying to keep from cumming yet. He wanted to pull this out a little longer. They'd not been going long.

He closed his eyes, trying to pull his focus away from the pleasure, from the sensation between his legs. He closed his eyes, sucking hard on Alana's neck, trying desperately to keep his mind blank. He didn't want to think about anything. He just wanted sex. He just wanted control. He just... He wanted numbness.

"I'm so close! Fuck, Hannibal!" She moaned.

He pulled her away from the wall and shoved her onto the bed, pulling himself out of her.

"What did you call me?" He growled as he pulled himself over her, running his cock slowly over the space between her legs, light as a feather.

"Please..." She begged.

"No. You're not allowed to cum until I say."

He didn't give her a second to compose herself, to think, to do anything. He propped himself up on his knees again, shoving himself back inside of her, the feeling now familiar and welcomed. Her fingers were digging into the sheets again, on the verge of screaming as he thrust inside of her, in and out, in and out... He pressed his fingertips between her folds, finding her clit quickly, and rubbing, falling into time with his thrusts...

She let out a scream, short and tortured, trying her best to keep from having an orgasm. These screaming pants became more and more frequent as he thrust, and he could feel himself just on the cusp of orgasm himself. Oh, he was going to cum. He couldn't hold it in anymore. Her screams below him, his inability to control himself...

Release came quickly, his semen filling up the condom. He groaned, letting himself make a noise for the first time since they'd started. Fuck... The pleasure, the feeling, was intense. Though, still, it didn't compare to the orgasm he'd had whenever he'd masturbated to Will. This didn't even come close... And then it was over.

He didn't know what he expected. Just the thought of Will made him weaker than Alana could ever make him. A thought made Hannibal weak, made him scream, made him whine and moan... But full on sex with a real human being? Nothing. There was nothing. It was just... It was physical. There was nothing else there. No substance. There was nothing there for him. It was just another body tangled with his, not another soul... And left him horrifically unfulfilled.

He pulled out and didn't wait to drop to his knees and continue rolling his fingers over her clit, determined to torture her a little more, making her wait to cum... He might have been left unsatisfied, but she didn't have to be. He supposed that she should get something out of her trip over here. He couldn't leave her hanging like that.

"PLEASE SIR!" She screamed, begging...

"Okay. Go ahead." He granted her permission.

She was screaming. She screamed, moaned... He watched her entire body tighten as she threw her head back, moaning as the orgasm ripped through her. Ten seconds, twenty seconds passed... She just lay there like that, moaning and squirming below him... And he hardly cared. He pulled himself to his feet, tore off the used condom, and walked out of the room.

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He shifted onto his side, facing her. He didn't really want to talk, but again, he didn't want to be rude. He knew that passing out immediately after sex was usually deemed as distasteful. The least that he could do was talk to her for a little while, right? He supposed that he was a little drowsy, but even so...

"What time do you have to be home?" He inquired.

"Uh... Sunday night. Margot took the boys for the weekend. Teaching them to ride horses. Noah, our oldest, just turned 8 on Tuesday. So she wants him to start riding." She replied.

"Why didn't you go with them? It's your family."

"Margot's ass looks so good in that riding uniform that it's just too hard to keep things PG for the boys."

He just chuckled.

"No... I just don't like horses much, and she actually has a job, so she doesn't get a lot of time with the boys. And I needed some alone time. But to be honest, I hate staying alone. It's too big of a house."

"Hmm."

"So are you going to tell me what that was about?"

"Um... Well, I suppose you're not giving me a lot of a choice. I'm in debt to you now. I... I met someone. And things just happened... Confusion, drama, I don't know what you might call it. But he stopped whatever we had before it could really start. I suppose."

"I'm sorry, Hannibal."

"I am as well. I just... I don't know what happened. It feels as if I'll never find someone to love me."

"I love you."

"What?"

"Well, I mean, obviously not in the way that you might be searching for. I'm not in love with you. But... When we were in college, when we were young, you were a handsome older guy who actually showed interest in me. You had 10 years on me and thought that I was cute. And it felt like more than fucking to me. I was in love with you as a kid. You were a perfect idea to me. I loved you. And I don't think that love is something you lose. If you love someone, part of you loves them for life."

He just let a small smile over his lips as he pressed them against her forehead.

"I'm going to get some wine. Should I bring you back some?" He inquired, pulling himself out of bed.

"Yes, thank you."

He smiled and stepped out of the room, hurrying down the hall... That was when his eye caught a glimpse of the phone, sitting on the edge of his harpsichord... The wine left his mind immediately and he walked toward it. Perhaps... Maybe, just maybe... Maybe Will had texted. Maybe Will had said something to make it all better. It was a long shot but...

William: You know what? Screw it. I didn't want to get you involved in this, but I think that the moment we kissed, you got involved in this shit show. My ex husband is coming after Abigail and I. I didn't want you to get involved. I wanted to keep you out of it. But I can't do it. Okay? I can't do it. I'm connected to you some how. I don't know what's going to happen. He's been missing, and his apartment was full of stuff about us. He's coming for Abigail and I, and I don't know what he's going to do. But if he does kill us, I want to die happy. If you want to stay with us, if you still want something to do with us, I'd like that. I'm not going to stop our connection, our date, our whatever because of him. I'm not going to let him take the last good thing in my life.

Ready, Aim, Fire

He lied to Abigail.

He couldn't tell her. He couldn't worry her. He didn't know how to tell her. He couldn't do this to her. She was already worrying herself sick with things, to a point where she'd been having panic attacks. How could he add this to her list? So he lied. He was lying by omission. He was pretending like nothing was wrong, doing his best to be opaque, to seem strong for her, to hide his fear. But the moment that he put her to bed, the moment that he told her to go to sleep... He pulled out his shotgun and sat at the door.

Technically, it wasn't his. It belonged to Garrett. He had stolen it the night that they'd packed up and left. It had been the last thing that he'd grabbed before walking out the door, and he'd grabbed it for exactly a time like this. He took it for safety. For protection. And he'd kept it since then. He'd not needed it until then. Sure, he kept it fully loaded right underneath the bed, right where he could grab it if someone sneaked up on him... But this was the first time that he'd really needed it.

He sat in a kitchen chair propped right in front of the door. His eyes were trained on the big floor-to-ceiling window on the same wall as the door, right there for him to see everything, right there for him to make sure that no one could get in... His finger was on the trigger, ready to shoot anything that came for him.

It was closing in on 2 a.m. And for the first time in ages, it felt like sleep wanted to take him in, like the high tide was coming in fast, trying to drag him in. On the most inconvenient of nights, no less. Sleep was coming like a drug, all of the pain from earlier that same day taking its toll on him. The adrenaline and fear that had pumped through him when Jack had told him what happened was going now, sending him crashing...

And then there was the whole breakup with Hannibal. He didn't know if he could even call it a breakup, not really. But whatever it was, it had hurt like hell. It felt like tearing a hole in his own heart... That was probably why he texted back, confessing everything, trying to resolve things. But no reply had come. Hannibal was doing something else. Or perhaps he was pissed. Will didn't know, and didn't have the brain capacity to care.

Grogginess was taking him over, lapping over him like the ocean at high tide. He closed his eyes for a long moment, breathing slowing tremendously. Jesus, he was exhausted. This was inconvenient to say the least...

Until he noticed the movement outside of the door.

It was as dark as it could get in the city, though it seemed darker than usual. No cars running, no obnoxiously bright lights tonight. It seemed quiet. But he could see the silhouette outside his window, the quick flash of movement. His finger tightened slightly, ready to pull the trigger at any moment. Normally, his hands would be trembling uncontrollably. But right then... He felt strong. Focused. He was going to shoot. He had to protect Abigail.

Abigail. She was all that mattered. Garrett Jacob Hobbs was not taking her back. He didn't care that she was his biological daughter. He didn't care that he had done his shit job at raising her. He didn't care. Abigail was his now. And she was sleeping in the next room. He was not taking her back.

Knock. Knock. Knock.

"W-Who is it?" He called out, trying to be loud enough to be heard, but it came out in a whimper. Jesus, he was pitiful. His muscles were tight and composed, letting him stay strong. But his mind, his voice, his heart, whatever... That was still terrified. All of these memories were coming back, all of these scenarios running through his head again.

The blood rolling down his legs, onto the stained sheets. The sound of his own horrified, broken shrieks, begging to be saved from his own husband. Would that happen again? If Garrett overpowered him, or if the gun malfunctioned, or if he stalled, would he do the same thing. Would he pin him down again? What would he do to Abigail?

Knock. Knock. Knock.

He stood up from his chair, gun ready to fire at any moment. He could do it. He could put a bullet into his tormentor's head. He could put a bullet right between his eyes. He could kill him. He could end it. He could finish it. He could finally get his revenge, the revenge for everything that had happened to him. The rape, the pain that he'd brought on...

His fingers curled around the knob, hand strong and ready. He pulled it back a crack before wrapping his hand back around the gun and kicking it open, biting down on his lip. He aimed the gun upward, ready to shoot, ready to kill. All he saw was a shadowy figure before him, cloaked by darkness...

This was it. This was it. He was finally going to kill the motherfucker who had ruined all that he had built up. He was going to kill the man that ruined his life. He was going to finally kill Garrett Jacob Hobbs. And he refused to give it a second thought. He was going to kill him. It was kill him or let Abigail die. He had to do it. He had no choice.

"Get back, you son of a bitch. You're not taking her." He growled, bravery flooding through him.

"Will!" A voice exclaimed, though he couldn't fully make it out.

"Get back! You aren't touching her!" Will screamed.

"Will, Will, calm down. It's me." A familiar voice coaxed, bringing him back off of the brink of panic. This was a Danish accent, sweet and calming...

Hannibal.

Hannibal Lecter. The man that he had surrendered everything to. The man that was taking his heart, piece by piece, and reassembling it. The man that he was falling in love with. Hannibal Lecter. His finger pulled away from the trigger, the fear and panic that had run through his

veins dissolving, the ice that had run through his body melting... He was safe. He was okay. He didn't have to be afraid, didn't have to be brave. It was just Hannibal. Hannibal. Hannibal.

"Hannibal." He squeaked out, any hint of strength now gone.

That was when he started shaking. His body started trembling so hard that he couldn't keep his grip on the gun anymore. He let it fall to the ground, unable to think about how stupidly dangerous that was. He just let it fall and let himself fall into Hannibal's arms, open and ready to catch him. Knees too weak to keep himself standing anymore, he clutched Hannibal, begging for strength, for protection, for something, anything.

"It's okay, William. I've got you. I'm here. I'm here." He whispered.

Will's body too weak to hold himself up, he let his weight fall on Hannibal. He was strong enough to hold him upright, and it felt perfectly... Natural. Okay. Safe. He felt safe. For the first time since he'd married Garrett Jacob Hobbs, for the first time since Jacob had laid a hand on him... Will Graham felt completely safe, and completely loved.

"Hannibal." He sobbed his name. He didn't know what else to say. He didn't even know why he was sobbing. But everything started falling apart, and falling into place, all at once. It was okay now. It was okay.

"Come here, my love." He whispered, hand reaching up underneath his weak knees and lifting him up. He didn't know if he felt safe or emasculated, but he didn't care. He had been strong for too long. He'd been holding it together, trying desperately to keep composed, for months. He'd been doing it all alone, completely and utterly alone... It was killing him. Eating him alive. And Hannibal made it seem okay to be vulnerable.

He carried him over to the couch in front of the window, laying him down onto it. Shaking, falling apart, Will curled up as Hannibal sat down next to him. His head found its way to Hannibal's lap, body shaking... Hannibal seemed a bit surprised, but Will hardly noticed. He was facing toward Hannibal, his eyes looking up at him, travelling up his white t-shirt, his neck, up to his face... He didn't make eye contact, but studied him over anyways.

"Are you okay?" Hannibal whispered, running a hand through Will's curls.

"You came." He whispered, voice trembling.

"Of course I did. Did you think that I was going to let you fight that madman alone?"

"But... I mean, I barely know you... And you came here, maybe even risked your life...."

"I know you, William. I know every inch of you. I know your mind, I know your soul. I know you like I know my own mind, care for you like I care for my own soul, need you like I need my own heart. I'm not going to abandon you. Ever."

"I... I just..."

"I'll protect you, William. I will protect you and Abigail. It's okay. I'm not going to let him touch you or Abigail. I'm going to keep you safe. Okay?"

"Okay."

Will pulled himself upright, feeling strength coming back into him. He still felt weak, still felt vulnerable, still felt fear and pain rushing through him... But he was more composed now. He pulled himself into Hannibal's lap, something that he had never done before. He'd never sat on another man's lap, or gotten even remotely close to someone like that. He'd kept a distance, even from Garrett. But it felt natural, okay, when it was with Hannibal. Like he didn't need to be afraid.

Wrapping his arms around Hannibal's neck, he curled up in his protective arms. He could smell his cologne, sharp and intrusive, but still subtle in a way. Like it had faded. He could smell some lingering scent of semen, a smell he recognized from when he had masturbated, and Will assumed that he'd had another session, another round. He could smell... Hmm. Perfume? That was when he realized why it took so long.

Brows furrowed, he bit down on his lip. Did he say something, ruin the moment, or did he keep quiet? Did he really have a right to ask about it? He wasn't really angry, considering that they had never been official to begin with... But his curiosity was admittedly piqued.

"You were having sex." Will muttered, arms still around his neck.

"What's that?" Hannibal inquired, like he wasn't sure if he'd caught that.

"You were having sex. That's why you took so long. I smell it on you."

"Yes. I invited a friend of mine over. I was... Hurt. When you told me that you were leaving and I wouldn't see you again. I just... I feel things deeply, and I rarely know what to do with those feelings. I called my friend, Alana. She's a friend with benefits of mine. She allowed me to take out my feelings on her. Is that okay?"

"Yeah, I get it. Just... Please... Don't do it again."

"I won't, but may I ask why not?"

"Because I want you. I want... Us. I don't know. I want you to be mine. I want to have us. I want it to be you and I. I guess."

Hannibal just smiled. He could feel it pressed up against his shoulder. Strong hands pressed against his back and pulled him closer, making him feel safer. His hand reached up and stroked down his curls, holding him tight.

"I do too." He whispered.

"I want you. I need you, Hannibal."

Hannibal pulled him out of his chest, pulling him upward, so that they were looking into each other's eyes. And for once, it was okay. It was okay, making eye contact. He never made eye contact. It had broken his mother's heart, it had made getting a job hard, it was just something that he couldn't do... But there he was, staring into his eyes, hazel eyes devouring him like an ocean... And it felt perfectly natural.

"I don't know how this is real. Any of it. I never believed in love at first sight. I never believed in love, William. I believed in nothing. I didn't think love was possible for me. But with you... It's different. Okay? I don't know how, but it's different. I feel like I've known you for a thousand years, even though it has only been days. I feel like I know you. I feel like... You're the other half of my soul, William. So when you ended whatever we had... It broke me. I needed to take it out. But as long as you are by my side, I will need nothing else in this world." He whispered, sincerity in every word.

"I... I... I know. I need you. And I..."

"I love you, William. I love you."

"I love you too."

His body was shaking, every inch of him trembling as he fell into Hannibal's arms again, head pressed up against his neck. His arms wrapped around him again, pulling him in close. There was this connection between them that made him question all that was real, all that he had ever held dear. It made him question who he really was, what he really was, what he stood by. All of these walls and rules that he'd made fell, crumbled. And it was just Hannibal Lecter.

"Dad?" A new voice chimed in.

Snapping up, Will turned to see Abigail standing in the hallway. She wore her pajamas, and her hair a wreck and her eyes drugged with sleep. She was confused. What was her therapist doing in her house with her dad on his lap at 2 in the morning? He didn't blame her for being a little confused.

"Abigail." He replied, that being all that he could say.

"What are you doing?" She inquired.

"I... Um..." He stuttered, not sure where to begin.

"I'm taking you two into my home. You don't have to be here anymore. I'm going to protect you. Okay? Pack up your things, and I'm taking you home with me." Hannibal piped up.

"Protect us from what?" She inquired, rubbing her eyes.

Will's face flushed, turning white as a ghost as he realized that he needed to tell her. There wasn't any hiding it now. Hannibal's eyes studied him, causing the back of his neck to grow hotter, redder. He had lied to Abigail, and now...

"I'll explain it to you later. Just... Go get your things, Abigail." He whispered, shame washing over him.

She just nodded, not questioning it. Usually, she would've questioned every move that he made. But something about Dr. Lecter's presence made her realize that this was important, and questioning it wouldn't help her at all.

"I'll tell her everything later." Will sighed before he could be interrogated.

"Okay. I understand. Come on. I'm taking you with me. He won't know that you're with me. Pack up everything you need, get your dogs, and come on. We'll be okay."

"We'll be okay."

Sleep

"You may sleep in my room, if you wish. I would gladly sleep on the couch." Hannibal offered, taking Abigail's bag and sitting it in the second guest bedroom. There were two, and he had soiled the first one... Abigail had made her home in the conversation pit with the television on, and he didn't expect her to go to sleep tonight again. Will had explained what was happening during the ride over... But he decided that, since there was no saying how long they'd be staying with him, that he'd put her things in the room she would be staying in.

Will was walking toward him, eyes tired, every inch of him screaming that he was overwhelmed. Leaving home in the middle of the night because of your psychotic ex husband? It was enough to overwhelm anyone. Will had kissed Abigail on the head, trying to give her some form of comfort, but she hardly responded. Something had been triggered in her when Will told her what happened. She hardly said a word the whole way home, any childishness left in her drained. She walked into his home and immediately plopped down on the couch, followed by Will's dogs, all of them sitting next to her, huddled around her, protecting her.

"Didn't you just have sex in your room? I can take a guest bedroom." Will replied with a small chuckle.

"My partner and I were a bit too... Caught up in the moment to make it all the way up to the top floor, unfortunately." Hannibal replied, wringing his hands, a bit embarrassed.

"You were too horny to walk up some stairs so you did it in a guest bedroom?" Will groaned.

"Unfortunately."

"Fantastic. I'll sleep on the couch. At least that's gone unsoiled."

"If you're looking for a place that has been left untouched by my bodily fluids, you're going to have to sleep outside. Probably a block or two away."

"Dude."

"I paid for this place, I can do as I please."

Will shrugged as Hannibal led the way upstairs, leading him up to his own bedroom. It was four floors up, with his lobby being on the first floor, his workplace, the place where he met his clients, on the second, and a kitchen, dining room, and entertainment room being on the third. He kept his own room on the fourth floor because it was the hardest to access. People had to wait to access it. People had to commit to finding it. In a way, it was like himself. He rarely ever had sex, especially not casual sex, there. He kept it in his playroom, or in a spare bedroom, all on the first floor, in the back. But his bedroom, the place where he actually lived and kept his personal things... That was hardest to access.

"Where are you taking me?" Will inquired, trudging up the stairs behind him.

"My bedroom. The top floor." Hannibal replied.

"I can sleep downstairs. I'll take the couch. No big deal."

"I want you to be comfortable. What kind of host am I if I allow you to sleep on something lowly as a couch?"

"Hannibal, I can't ask any more of you."

"You're not asking. I'm offering."

"You're offering so much already, Dr. Lecter. I can't take your bed too."

Hannibal pivoted on his heel to face Will. They were standing in the stairwell between the second and third floor, the place between where he had screamed Will's name, so close to where they'd kissed for the first time.

"William... Look right there." Hannibal said quietly, pointing.

He obeyed, though baffled.

"That's where I screamed for you. And just beyond that wall? Do you remember what happened there?"

"I kissed you. Or you kissed me. Or... We kissed."

"We became one for the first time. William, you and Abigail are now my responsibility. Both of you. I will protect you with my life. I will love you with all that is in me. I will give you all I am. And I think you, in your own way, will do the same. I love you, William. Giving you my bed, my home, my protection... It's the least I can do."

Will hardly hesitated before dropping his bag and pulling Hannibal down a step, closer to him, and kissed him. Hannibal's eyes went wide, not entirely expecting that. Will had initiated kisses between them more than Hannibal could've dreamed. He had seemed so timid, but now... Hannibal just smiled against his lips after a moment, letting his eyes drift closed. It'd only been a day, two days, since they'd kissed, but it felt like a lifetime. It felt like it had been a million years since Hannibal had felt those lips...

He hadn't expected it, but Hannibal melted quickly into him. It felt as natural as breathing, kissing Will Graham. This felt so wild and erratic, like all logic and self-control had been abandoned when they found each other. Whatever they had been before, whoever they'd been before, whatever they'd stood by when it came to dating... It had flown out the window. All that mattered now was that they were together.

Hannibal pushed a hand through Will's curls, trying to keep him close. Will's hands were wrapped around his neck, a thumb running up and down his skin... Will's lips tasted like scotch and sweat and tears... Bitter, but at the same time, his lips were sweet, like it was a taste all his own...

Desire and temptation filled him. The urge to throw him up against the wall, carry him up to bed, do whatever he pleased with that boy. But at the same time, he wanted to be gentle, gentle enough to remind Will that he was safe... They were safe. Hannibal would never hurt him, not in the way that Garrett had. All that Hannibal wanted was to have Will beside him. All that Hannibal wanted was to be one with William Graham...

Will's breathing grew heavier, chest starting to heave as his breath ran out. His kisses became more frantic as he pulled closer, their positions a bit awkward, but Hannibal hardly caring. Hannibal's tongue slipped between Will's parted lips, a small moan coming from his throat, almost primal, almost desperate. Hannibal pulled him up onto the same step that he was on, pulling him closer, everything becoming wild and uncontrolled...

Before things could get too out of hand, Hannibal pulled his lips away, reluctant to leave him. Will's eyes, his lips, every part of his body, seemed to ache for him, pulling himself closer, though Hannibal stayed just out of reach.

"I love you." Will whispered, pulling away from him, though there were still only a few inches between them.

"I love you too, William. I love you. I don't know how I have come to love someone so quickly. Don't know how I have gotten myself so entangled in you and your life. But I love you."

Will leaned into his chest, face pressed just over where his heart lay beating in his chest. This was unlike last time. This wasn't some primal need. Hannibal didn't need to devour Will the way that he had wanted to before. He didn't have the bulging, distracting, almost-painful erection that he'd had before. Half-hard, maybe, but not desperate in the way that he'd been the first time. This was far more... Calm. Tame.

Fingers running through Will's curls, the warmth of his body pressed up against his, unable to tell where one ended and the other began in the darkness... It all felt so beautiful. So natural. So perfect. It was as if this was what he had been missing all along. Hannibal had never felt true romantic love for someone, not like this.

"Come, my love. You need your rest." Hannibal whispered.

"I need to check on Abigail... I don't want her so far away from me." Will replied, taking Hannibal by the hand as he led the way up.

"I can bring her up to the entertainment room for the night, if you wish. Third floor. I don't think she'll be getting much sleep."

"And I will?"

"Yes. You've been awake all night already. I see you swaying when you walk. Your kiss was sloppier than last time. You're exhausted."

"Okay. I'll put my bags away and go get her, okay?"

"Hardly. I will get her. You get to bed. You need your rest, William. I am more than happy to make the trek to go get her."

"You've got to be as tired as I am, Hannibal. You were the one fucking some girl earlier."

After he checked his phone, he bolted back into the room, explained to Alana, and hurried out of his home. The adrenaline had been pumping through him, and the effects were just starting to wear off and he was starting to get tired. But he hardly cared. Will had more of a reason. A better reason. And he was his guest. Hannibal needed to treat him with the utmost respect and care.

"You're right. I am. But I will bring Abigail up, and then I will go to sleep on the couch."

"God, Hannibal, no. You're sleeping next to me, if you're going to insist I sleep in your bed."

Hannibal just smirked as he pulled the door open to his bedroom, pulling Will into the king-sized bed. He didn't want to try and manipulate or exploit Will in the slightest, and truly was content with sleeping on the couch. But if Will was insisting...

Will sat down his bags next to the bed and pulled off his shirt, like it was some routine that he couldn't bother to disrupt. His back was muscular, strong, his body sculpted into a form that was easily looked over by those who didn't know how to appreciate the subtlety... His body was beautiful, something that could be greatly appreciated... His body, the flexing of his muscles, the way that his joints moved... It was a work of art. It was almost enough to make Hannibal believe in the gods.

He just shook his head and headed back downstairs.

Abigail was curled on the couch still, absentmindedly stroking one of the dogs with one hand, her head up against another. She looked dazed, confused almost... He knew that she knew what was happening, but Hannibal wondered if she really comprehended what was happening. This would be a good time for a therapy session, though...

"Abigail." Hannibal piped up, disrupting her dazed, absentminded staring at the television screen.

She turned toward him, halfheartedly acknowledging his existence, before turning back to the TV. The short acknowledgement was enough to let him know that she was listening, that he had at least some of her attention...

"Your father would feel better if you came up to the third floor and slept on the couch there, if that's okay. You may sleep down in the guest room tomorrow night, if you wish, but if you are planning on staying on the couch, he would prefer you go upstairs, so he can be closer to you. Okay?"

"Okay." Abigail replied halfheartedly, pulling herself up lazily, looking like every step, every move, required some huge amount of effort.

He led the way as she followed him in silence, refusing to speak. The dogs all hurried behind her, trailing behind her like she was the sole purpose of their existence. They hurried up the stairs, the clicking of paws and nails against the wooden staircase.

"Are you holding up okay, Abigail?" Hannibal inquired.

"No. I... I feel like... When my dad raped Will, and we left, it feels like something shattered. Since then, we've been trying to put it back together. Glue, tape, whatever we can use to fix it. But now... It feels like he's coming back and trying to shatter it again, only this time... I don't know if we can fix it, Dr. Lecter." She replied.

"I understand. Everything you've tried to build up is being threatened. But I swear to you with all that is in me, I will fight to protect you. I will protect you both, Abigail."

They passed through the second floor in silence. Hannibal's eyes caught a small glimpse of the chair where she had sat when she opened up to him for the first time. Hannibal had caught glimpses of who she really was. Teasing, childish in ways, but mature beyond her years... But now... It seemed like she was back to being that scared, exhausted little girl she had been when she sat across from him in that chair.

"Do you love my dad?" She inquired quietly as they headed up to the third floor.

"Yes." Hannibal answered simply.

"And you mean that?"

"Absolutely."

"You're not going to hurt him, are you?"

"Not in a million years, Abigail. I will love him with all that is in me. Both of you. I don't know how this happened so quickly. I don't have any idea how I went from being a poor, lonely soul to having a family, a man I love, a daughter I vow to protect, in just a matter of days. It feels like everything changed when you walked into my life, Abigail. And I'm grateful. There's nothing I would do to ruin that."

"Good."

He helped set her up, turned the TV on for her, let her make herself comfortable, and headed back up to the fourth floor. He didn't push anything. Didn't try to make much more conversation. He just let her do as she wished, let her make herself comfortable with the dogs... And then he hurried back upstairs.

The door creaked open slowly, and Hannibal peaked his head inside. And just as he expected, Will was sprawled out, spread-eagle, passed out on the bed. Hannibal let a small smile creep over his lips, the sight truly being a pleasant one. Will, shirt gone, stripped down to nothing but his boxers, passed out, asleep. Hannibal had every opportunity to snuggle up next to him, to hold himself up against that body crafted by the gods. He didn't even want to do anything. Just sleeping next to him, their bodies intertwined, it would be enough.

But he couldn't.

Will hadn't even allowed his husband sleep with his body pressed against him. Abigail had mentioned that Garrett always slept above the covers. Hannibal couldn't violate his personal space that way. Even though Will had consented to sleeping in the same bed... Hannibal wasn't going to do that without active consent. He wasn't going to just curl onto the bed.

Instead, Hannibal grabbed a quilt that he kept on the back of his recliner that sat in the corner. His home was full of small places for him to cozy up. That was something that Hannibal cherished. Finding a warm, comfortable place to read, to savor the quiet simplicity of his life. He appreciated adventure, new, exciting things to do... But the moments in which he could sit back, relax, breathe... Those were moments that he truly cherished.

He pulled the white quilt over his sleeping lover. Will stirred slightly, but no more than to curl up a bit, going from spread-eagle to curled-on-his-side, attempting to find warmth. Hannibal leaned down and pressed his lips up against his temple, gentle enough to go unnoticed.

"Goodnight, my love." Hannibal whispered.

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"Where the hell is Abigail? Abigail, fuck, where is she? Where the fuck is she?" He screamed, entire body trembling beneath his touch.

"She's okay. She's safe. You're safe. We're all safe."

"He's coming for her. He's going to take her." He was panting now, but not screaming.

"I'm not going to let him. William, I'm here. I'm protecting you. I promise. He won't touch Abigail."

"Hannibal..."

"I have you, my love. I won't let him touch you."

Will fell heavily into Hannibal's arms, too weak to hold himself up. A ragged sob escaped his lips, entire body writhing in fear and pain and terror and anxiety. Hannibal's hands ran through his curls, praying that it would be enough to soothe his aching spirits and fearing soul. Lips pressed into the back of Will's neck. Will's nails dug small crescents into Hannibal's back, clinging for dear life, like he might die of fright if he let go. Like Garrett Jacob Hobbs might come for him and take his Abigail if he dared to let go.

Hannibal's hands wandered up and down his bare back. Soft, silky, unblemished skin. Beautiful skin, really. Golden. His bare chest was sweaty, glistening in the light that streamed through the window from the street lamps. Hannibal could feel the outline of each tense muscle, savoring it as he started to relax beneath his touch. Through his boxers, pressed against his knee, Hannibal could feel the outline of Will's cock. Half-hard, though not from being aroused, and just from having been asleep. From what Hannibal could tell, he had to be at least 6 or 7 inches, and that wasn't even fully erect... Oh, how he might've longed for it if it were under different circumstances. But as he held Will, sex was the furthest thing from his mind.

Will's fingers were digging into Hannibal's skin as he sobbed, but he hardly cared. He ran his hands through his hair, down his neck, down his back, and back. The heaving of his chest slowed as Hannibal shushed him, desperate to calm him down, desperate to make it all okay again.

"I have you. I have you." Hannibal reassured, holding him tighter.

"Save me, Hannibal. My mind is diseased. There is a demon inside of me. His name is Death, and he is filled with dark and swarming flies. He was left there by Garrett Jacob Hobbs. He won't leave me alone, Hannibal. He haunts my dreams. He breaks my soul, slowly crushing all that remains. I try to rebuild myself in the light, but all that I manage to fix is shattered by his weight. I'm sick, Hannibal. Save me. Kill him." Will murmured, voice only half coherent.

"I will protect you. I will take your demons. I will bear your demons for you, and I will fight off your nightmares. I am yours, William. I am whatever you need. A savior. A protector. A friend. A lover. I'm yours. And I will take the burden from your shoulders. Just give it to me."

He wasn't sure who moved first. Perhaps they were linked and moved at the same time in unison. Either way, they ended up lying down, curled beneath the sheets, clinging tightly to each other. They were a tangled mess of limbs and clothes and lack thereof. Will was still trembling, coaxing Hannibal to pull him in closer.

"Talk to me. Please." Will begged.

"What do you want me to say?" Hannibal inquired.

"Anything. Just put me to sleep."

A smile on his lips, Hannibal let his first language come back to his lips, coming back with sweet nostalgia. Words sweet as these hadn't rolled off his tongue in years. He'd had no need. He'd thought in that language, written it down, but hadn't let the words spill from his lips in at least two years. They came back with nostalgia and peace, the feeling spilling into his voice, leaking into the air around them...

"Visa tai man yra tavo. Visi, kad aš priklauso jums. Mes vienas, du pusmečius, vieną visumą. Aš tave myliu daugiau nei žodžiai gali pradėti pasakyti. Mano meilė tau yra niekada nesibaigianti istorija. Duok man savo demonų. Aš bus apsaugoti jus su visais, kad yra mane."

By the time he'd finished talking, sleep had taken Will in its grasp, and Hannibal allowed himself to follow his lover into that void of sleep.

In the Eye of the Hurricane

In the eye of the hurricane, there is quiet.

Will leaned back, that moment between awake and asleep, between eyes open and eyes closed, and it was quiet. Usually, this is where the eye ended and his daily storm began again, starting with screaming and thrashing because of the nightmares. But this time, the nightmares were gone. He'd woken with them in the middle of the night, or perhaps closer to dawn... He didn't remember much. He remembered Hannibal's words, spoken in some beautiful foreign language, making no sense and all the sense in the world all at once...

And then he heard the barking. He felt the rays of sunshine flutter through the window, landing on his exposed skin. The TV was blaring Spongebob, the old, familiar voices bordering between nostalgic and funny and annoying as hell. He heard the rhythmic, familiar thumping of tails and the skitter of nails on hardwood and tile. Puppy paws running on the floor, the dogs excited in their new environment. He heard what seemed to be laughing, and he could hear Abigail's voice, muffled behind all of the noise...

He could smell something cooking in the kitchen below him, something delectable, something that brought him back to the days of peace that he'd had before the demon named Death had found its way into the very crevices of his soul, in between the cracks and fragments of his broken mind. It brought him back to days of innocence, when he was still young, before he started to fall apart. Before everything started to fall apart. Back to the days when he awoke to the aroma of sizzling bacon and black coffee. Back to the days when his only worry was that he'd have to face a rude group of kids. Back before he had to worry about meeting his daughter's needs, back before he had to worry about whether or not he was a good father. It was the simplicity...

And for whatever reason, the eye of the hurricane stretched for miles, to a point where Will could no longer see the storm coming.

Sleep still clouded his mind as he leaned back, searching for the warmth of Hannibal's body next to him, but it was nowhere to be found. As he searched for the warmth of another body, all he found was the warm sheets, rumpled from where a body had slept in it, lingering warmth in the fabric. Will let out a small sigh before inhaling deeply, catching Hannibal's scent again. It no longer smelled like sex and borderline betrayal, the smell that had caused a pang of jealousy in his chest the night before, though he had no good reason for feeling that way. No, it just smelled like Hannibal. Cologne and artificial pine trees and sweets from childhood... It smelled like the man that he had so quickly grown to love, and it was almost enough to satisfy him, to bring him peace, to bring him comfort.

But not quite enough.

Groaning and only coaxed out of bed because of his desire to feel Hannibal's arms around him, he pulled himself from the fort of messy sheets and padded downstairs, rubbing the

sleep from his eyes, body feeling like it weighed a thousand pounds, but in the best way humanly possible.

"Yeah, he's just... I don't know. He's really nice, and I feel like I know him really well, and I really want to get to know him better, you know? He's really smart, and sweet, and sensitive... It's not even a crush, I don't think. Well, it's kind of a crush. I don't know. I like him. But he feels like... Like my best friend too. I don't know." Abigail mused on as Hannibal flipped a pancake expertly in his skillet.

"Care to tell me the name of this boy?" Hannibal inquired with a small chuckle, indulging her in her childish whims, talking about boys she liked. For whatever reason, Will would've never thought that'd she'd be one to muse on about her high school crushes. She just went on dates, maybe had sex, maybe didn't, not that Will cared. As long as they were being safe. But it always seemed that they were the ones pursuing Abigail, and she never saw them as more than a plaything. But now, she was actually going on and on about a boy to Hannibal... And Hannibal was listening...

"Alexander." She replied, dreamy look in her eye.

"Aside from being 'nice', would you like to tell me more about him?"

"He's really cool. He's super into aliens and shit. Like, seriously, I've never met anyone so obsessed with space. He's a Star Wars nerd. And he likes to write and direct little short films. And he's good at it. He doesn't have that many friends, and he mostly hangs around the band geeks, but he doesn't actually play in band. And he's really impulsive and spontaneous, too. I was hanging out with him last week, right? Last Friday. And we were talking outside of his car, and he just told me to come on and we drove around for about two hours, just talking, and then he got us into this concert for some weird indie band neither of us had ever heard of. And they sucked. So we left early and made out in his car instead. He's basically stereotypical skinny white dream boy from pretty much every John Green book. But he's kind of perfect. He makes me feel like I'm living in some sort of teen flick."

"He sounds lovely. Can't wait to meet him." Hannibal replied with a short chuckle.

"And what will you be meeting him as?"

"Perhaps your other father, someday."

"Whoa, yeah, sorry Dr. Lecter, but I'm not calling you Daddy. That's Will's job."

Hannibal turned toward her and dug his fingers into the pile of flour he'd used, scooping it out and flinging it toward her face. Flour clinging to her skin as the puff cleared around her, a small scowl crossed over her lips as she crossed her arms, pouting. A small smile found its way to his lips, head shaking. Hannibal was smiling that self-satisfied smirk of his, the one that Will had already grown quite well acquainted with.

Will watched from the doorway, pleased to see them getting along so well. He wasn't quite sure how long it had been since they'd been down here together, but they seemed to be getting on better than Will could've ever hoped for. Pancakes and bacon cooking, coffee

brewing, his daughter and his boyfriend talking and laughing. The dogs were playing in the entertainment area, running frantically around the harpsichord, making Will a bit antsy, but Hannibal didn't seem concerned in the slightest. It was a bright, clear, sunny Saturday morning, and the storm from last night had disappeared. The sun was rising now.

"Good morning, William. Sleep well?" Hannibal inquired, causing Will to jump, having not realized that his presence had been noticed.

"Yes, I did. Very well. Thank you." Will replied, making his way toward the kitchen, part of him eager for Hannibal's embrace. Touch had always set Will on edge, but from Hannibal, it seemed like the one thing that he'd been desperate for his entire life. Like he'd been slowly drowning, and with every touch, Hannibal breathed new life into him.

"Glad to hear. Are you ready for breakfast?"

"Sure."

Before Hannibal could turn back to his cooking, as he hurried about the kitchen, Will pressed himself up underneath Hannibal's chin. Not expecting it, he stiffened a bit at first. Will instinctively reached for his sides, searching for pockets, but he still wore nothing but his boxers. He kept his hands at his sides though, waiting for Hannibal to wrap his arms around him. There was something comforting in that touch, and wrapping his arms back around him didn't feel necessary.

Slowly, Hannibal's arms wrapped around him, like this was some strange gesture. But in all actuality, to Will, it wasn't strange at all. Pressing up against someone, not really hugging but expecting to be hugged, was the norm. He'd never been comfortable with touch in his life, but before Garrett had snapped, and even still with Abigail at times, he'd always done it. It was a way of signalling that he needed touch, needed affection, but didn't necessarily want to fully initiate.

But as Hannibal's arms tightened around him, it felt like there was a breath of new oxygen flowing through his veins, like he'd been suffocating for years and was finally allowed to breathe again. Will pressed his ear up against his chest, right above where his heart was hammering in his rib cage. He was wearing a plain gray sweatshirt, something that seemed out of place for Hannibal, but Will hardly cared. His arms tight around him, the pressure being enough to make it hard to breathe... It made him feel like he was safe. Like he could breathe again for the first time in centuries. Like, for the first time, he didn't have to be afraid.

Will eventually gave way and let him let go before walking off without a word of explanation. Sometimes, even though touch was difficult, a squeeze could be enough to calm him down. He couldn't fully explain it. But touch from certain people at certain times was okay, and it made everything feel better. It made the world slow down. His old psychiatrist would've called it a pressure stim, but Will didn't care if it was just a stim or a genuine longing for human contact. For him, it was a true sign of trust.

"Well... Um... Who's ready for pancakes?" Hannibal inquired with a small smile, a smile that was confused, but a smile that was genuinely happy

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one whole, moving in perfect harmony. Their beating hearts, their music-filled souls, their unfaltering steps all fell in line with the music, and it was as if there was nothing but this room, the music, each other...

Will's eyes found Hannibal's and it was alright. Normally, with anyone else, his eyes would dart away. Eyes were distracting, hard to focus in on. But Hannibal... He was different. His eyes seemed okay to look at, even appealing. It wasn't like seeing too much or too little. It was like seeing just what he was supposed to see. It was like looking straight into his own soul somehow. Those beautiful amber eyes staring back at him, warm and inviting and full of nothing but love and adoration and curiosity and...

"I don't know what it is about you. Us. This. It feels like all I know is crumbling, but in the best way possible. You make me happy, Dr. Lecter." Will whispered, pressing his forehead up against Hannibal's.

Hannibal swooped down quickly, lips stealing a quick, small kiss before returning back to his original place, forehead pressed against Will's... The music changed to another classical piece, one almost the same as the last, though Will could notice the change as Hannibal changed their rhythm of movement to match the new tempo.

"I'm in love with you William. I'm hopelessly in love with you. When I laid eyes on you, when I heard your voice over the phone... I was smitten. And this doesn't feel like anything I've experienced. This is more than platonic love, this is more than enjoying another's company, this is far more than lust... This is love beyond what I've ever felt in this lifetime." Hannibal whispered.

Hannibal suddenly led the way toward the ladder where they had first kissed, leading the way as they danced, before pushing him up against the ladder without warning. Will's breath hitched as Hannibal pushed him back against the ladder, lips pressed against his, hands moving down toward his waist... It startled him at first, but he quickly sunk back into the kiss, melting into Hannibal's touch like it was second nature.

Will's hands found Hannibal's chest, running up and down, feeling his toned body beneath his shirt. He didn't have any desire to do anything with it, to touch it in any sort of sexual way, but he could appreciate the sculpture of his physique, the way his muscles felt beneath his hands. His lips moved skillfully against Will's... Christ, those lips... Everything about the man in front of him made him feel weak and strong all at once, like he could do anything at all as long as he was trapped in his embrace, lost in his touch...

The kiss lasted little longer than twenty seconds before Hannibal broke the contact due to the fact that the record had stopped. Will longed for more, craved more touch, something that he'd never done before. He'd never wanted to be touched. He'd never wanted to be kissed. If anything, it was the exact opposite. But here and now... Jesus...

Will wanted to say something about how much he meant to him. He wanted to say something, but his mind was blank and Will figured that everything that he was feeling was being felt by Hannibal as well. He let his breathing slow as Hannibal backed away a bit, still close enough to breathe the same air, but not close enough to really be touching.

"What, am I making you, as some would call it, horny again?" Will chuckled, mocking what he had said after their first kiss. It was the first thing that he thought, and he hadn't had the brain capacity after that kiss to not say it.

"No, William." Hannibal laughed, wrapping an arm around his waist and pulling him close again, their bodies pressed against one another, yet not kissing. And he was right. Under his thin pajama bottoms, Will could feel everything. He wasn't hard, wasn't aroused... Will couldn't quite figure out why he had stopped...

"Why'd you stop kissing me then?" Will inquired, half teasing, half serious.

"Because I feared that if I didn't stop then, I might never stop." He whispered.

"Don't stop. Never stop." Will whispered.

Will's fingers traced the outline of his shirt, the fabric soft beneath his fingers, the pounding of Hannibal's heart just beneath his fingertips... Will curled the shirt beneath his hand, bunching it up and pulling him closer, pressing his lips against Hannibal's, as if nothing in the world, not crazy ex-husbands or crazy family drama or anything else in the world, could ever tear them apart.

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beneath Hannibal's touch. Something about this man. Something supernatural pulled them together.

"Alex, no. I can't go out." Abigail moaned.

Pause.

"Because. Family drama."

Pause.

"I'm not home right now. I'm living with my dad's boyfriend right now."

Pause.

"Dr. Hannibal Lecter."

Pause.

"Alex, I don't think that he'd appreciate that."

Pause.

"Yes, I might appreciate it, but..."

Pause.

"Dammit Alex, I'm gonna get in trouble."

Pause.

"Fine. I'll be downstairs."

She hung up her phone, letting out a small groan. She shifted from her place on the floor, pulling herself into sitting position. She sounded a little irritated, but Will could tell that it was little more than a facade. He could tell from her voice on the phone that she wasn't really all that upset with him. She definitely wanted him there. And Will, somehow, was okay with that.

Will had never tried to restrict her. He tried to keep her safe as well as he knew how, but she was a free spirit, and she mostly did what she wanted. She'd grown up without a single adult in her life. She had grown up figuring out what to do all by herself. She'd turned out okay. She was a smart kid, and he trusted her. So if she wanted to go downstairs and make out with a boy, Will wasn't going to stop her. He was just going to try and protect her.

"Alex is coming over. We'll be downstairs." Abigail groaned, heading for the stairs.

"Have fun." Hannibal called.

"Be safe. Be smart." Will yelled as she escaped down the stairs.

"Yeah, yeah." She called back, waving him off, playfully dismissive.

"Use condoms!" Will shouted.

"Oh my god, dad!" She screamed back.

"I'm not ready to be a grandfather, Abigail!"

As she disappeared, Will pulled himself into sitting position, knees curled into his chest, watching Hannibal for a long moment, studying him over. He wore the same sweat shirt that he'd worn that morning, which seemed a bit odd, considering how classy he seemed on the outside. And he was a classy man, undoubtedly. He had a taste for finer things. Will could tell that much from dinner. Will had suggested pizza, but Hannibal had taken the liberty to prepare some French dish that Will couldn't even pronounce. He was a classy, refined man with a taste for the finer things in life. But there he was, reclining on his couch in a sweatshirt and pajama bottoms with a glass of wine in hand.

Will studied him over again for the millionth time since they'd met. The curve of his lips... Christ, those lips... The way that his throat twitched when he swallowed. The way that his neck met his shoulder. The way that his strong hands held the wine glass with care, like he knew that he could shatter it if he tried. The way his chest rose and fell with every breath. Everything about him... Christ he was beautiful.

"What?" Hannibal chuckled, noticing Will's staring.

Will just shrugged.

"What?" Hannibal laughed, a bit more persistent this time.

"I'm just looking." Will replied.

"At what?"

"You."

"Might I ask why?"

"You're beautiful."

Hannibal turned away for a moment, looking flattered and a bit... Flushed. Will couldn't quite place the emotion for a moment before Hannibal sat down his wine and scooted closer, turning to Will. He reached out a strong hand, long, slender fingers reaching out for him, grazing lightly over his skin, over his cheek, down below his chin, pulling him closer, leaning in.

Hannibal's lips grazed softly over Will's, hardly more than a ghost, but it was enough to make Will weak in the knees. Eyes fluttered closed as he savored the taste of Hannibal's lips, the taste of wine and starlight... Will longed to pull closer, longed to hold him as close as he could, longed to join the other half of his soul, longed to hold him closer. But just like that, Hannibal pulled away.

"If either of us is beautiful, it is you. You're magnificent. A work of art."

"You flatter me."

"I do. I'd like to draw you. I'm a bit of an artist. It's more just dabbling, but I'd love to draw you one day. If that's okay with you."

Will felt himself blush a bit, eyes glancing down. He'd never considered himself beautiful, or anything short of disgusting, really. He was of average height, but he felt short, mostly because of how much he slouched. He was thin and bony, yet at the same time felt like he weighed too much, which made him go for days at a time without eating at times. he'd never felt beautiful. Never felt handsome. Never felt like a work of art. But Hannibal was somehow changing that.

Hannibal's hand stretched out and pressed beneath Will's chin, tilting his head up toward him. Will studied over Hannibal's face, and Hannibal seemed to be doing the same. Hannibal's thumb ran over the hairs of his scruffy beard, head tilting as his eyes drifted down, from his hairline to his lips, as if savoring every inch of him.

"You're beautiful, William." Hannibal whispered before turning toward a table that was on the side of the sectional, near where he was sitting. He pulled over a sketchpad and a pencil and began to draw, making light strokes, occasionally looking back up.

"William, could I ask you something?" He asked after awhile, not looking up from his sketchpad.

"Sure."

"This morning, you came up to me... It was a bit strange. The way you pined for touch, but did not quite reciprocate. I wish to understand you better. Might I ask what that was, exactly?"

"I wanted a hug."

"Well, when you want a hug, the majority of people will just hug the person that they're longing to make contact with. You just pressed yourself against me and waited for me to hug you."

"It's an autism thing, I guess. My old psychiatrist said that it was a pressure stim. Like... I needed touch. Like... Pressure. I don't know. But I don't necessarily want to hug back. I just need touch from some people. You're one of those people now, I guess."

"Fascinating. The autistic people who I have met before usually prefer this pressure from inanimate objects rather than human contact."

"I guess I'm just special... No, it has to be very specific people. I have to trust them completely."

"You trust me then?"

"Of course. I've never felt so connected to anybody on this level. It's almost spiritual, Dr. Lecter. I just met you. I hardly know you. But at the same time, I feel incredibly connected to you. I know you like I know my own soul. You're part of me. Of course I trust you."

Hannibal smiled, that genuine smile of his, rather than his self-satisfied smirk. He looked truly happy, truly pleased to know that Will could put so much faith in him. Will felt his face begin to flush, suddenly feeling open and vulnerable, like perhaps he had said too much, like perhaps he had rushed into this too fast and he had opened himself up too much to this man. But as Hannibal looked back at him, their eyes meeting and Will not feeling the immediate urge to look away, Will felt at ease. This was how things were meant to be.

"Lean back." Hannibal instructed as he sat down his sketchpad and pencil, and without questioning, Will obeyed.

He had an overwhelming amount of trust for this man. He wasn't afraid of being touched by him. He wasn't afraid of being hurt by him. He inhaled as Hannibal propped himself up on his knees, reaching forward, leaning over Will. Hannibal's legs were propped on either side of Will's, spread around his body, Hannibal's body perfectly in line with Will's. Will stayed perfectly still as Hannibal lowered himself over Will, holding him tightly, putting all of his weight on Will.

For someone else, perhaps it would've been strange. But the touch was an overwhelming comfort, making him feel safe again. Hannibal Lecter was the only man who could make him feel safe in a touch, like there was absolutely nothing for him to be afraid of. Nothing could hurt him. No one could damage him. Nothing could shatter him again. All the demons in his head hushed for just a moment in time as Hannibal's lips peppered his neck and behind his ear with soft grazes of his lips.

Beautiful.

"Is this alright?" Hannibal inquired.

"Yes... I feel safe like this." Will replied softly, closing his eyes.

"I will always keep you safe."

"I know you will."

Hannibal's hands moved slowly over Will's body, from his neck to his shoulders to his arms to his fingertips... His lips pressed up against his neck, both of them feeling utterly connected in the simplest and most complex of ways, like their very souls were intertwined. Will's demons hushed, his worry about Abigail and Garrett and everything else fading away.

"Talk to me." Will whispered.

"Mano meilė tau nežino ribų. Jūs mano mūza, mano gyvenimo priežastis. Kol tai viskas gerai, dar kartą, aš bus ramiai savo demonų."

As the sound of his words dripped from his tongue like honey off of a spoon, slow and sweet and calm, Will allowed himself to drift off. And for perhaps the first time in his life, he knew pure bliss. Pure calm. This was where his life was meant to be spent. Wrapped in Hannibal Lecter's embrace.

There Is Quiet

Hannibal's eyes fluttered open slowly, morning rays of sunshine shining softly through the window. Its soft, warm glow struck Will's skin in the most beautiful of ways, casting a golden light over his skin. His eyes were closed peacefully, and he still remained beneath Hannibal's arm, exactly where he'd been most of the night. He had drifted off to sleep in his embrace, and after Abigail had come upstairs with messy hair and frumpy clothes with her boyfriend, Hannibal had carried him off to bed. Will had hardly stirred, sleep having engulfed him in its embrace. Hannibal had reassumed his place over his sleepy lover and neither of them had stirred through the night. Not a single nightmare.

Will slept on his stomach, arms tightly tucked beneath his chest, curled into a ball, like he was trying to take up as little space as possible. Hannibal had practically enveloped him the night before, despite Will only being an inch or so shorter. He held himself like he was small, curling up and slouching, like his very existence was smaller than his body. Hannibal had always held himself with strength and confidence, and it seemed to reflect somehow.

Hannibal retracted his arm from Will's shoulder and tucked it beneath his chest, admiring the way that he looked with the golden streams of sunlight wrapping around him, eyes shut peacefully, entire body calm and relaxed rather than tense and stressed and afraid. He was so beautiful, so calm, so... So...

"Good morning." Will moaned, eyes opening slightly.

"Good morning." Hannibal whispered, reaching over and pushing back a stray curl.

Will just let out a small, contented hum in reply.

"Did you sleep well?" Hannibal queried.

"Better than I have in months." Will yawned, stretching out before pulling closer to Hannibal, curling into his chest.

"Good." Hannibal whispered before pressing his lips behind Will's ear.

"Perhaps it's because you're here to protect me from the demons that plague my dreams so often." Will whispered, pulling himself closer, nuzzling into Hannibal's chest.

Hannibal allowed himself to smile, really smile, for the millionth time since he'd met Will Graham. He'd rarely smiled before. Self-satisfied smirks, perhaps. But true smiles were rare for him. He rarely let them show. But with Will Graham, it felt okay. It felt safe. His lips curved upward as he pressed them against Will's forehead, smiling as Will curled deeper into his chest. Hannibal slowed his breathing to match Will's...

Words were not needed. Plenty had been exchanged yesterday, mostly from an excited Will talking about his dogs, explaining the different breeds and the subtle differences between every single terrier, differences aside from color. Hannibal had listened intently while

allowing himself to skim through a book and stroke through Winston's fur. Winston was a mutt that Will had picked up off the street, as with all of his other dogs. He hadn't bought a single dog, hadn't had the money, so he just picked up strays off of the street and took them home. But today, the morning sun fluttering through the curtains, curled into one another, they didn't need words.

He allowed his fingers to trace over Will. The soft place behind his ear, to the rigid curve of his jaw, down to the soft bend of where his neck met his shoulder, down to the sharp turn of his elbow, up to the fingertips that were pressed against Hannibal's chest, as if feeling for a heartbeat to connect the two of them again. Jesus, he was beautiful. He was more beautiful than anyone he'd ever laid eyes upon. His beauty was so subtle, so calm and peaceful, not someone who caught your eye the moment they walked into the room, but one you couldn't take your eyes off of after you found them.

William... His William...

He shifted a bit, onto his back, and Will rolled over top of him, head pressed against his chest. Hannibal's arm wrapped his neck, fingers playing through his hair, running through his curls, beautiful curls.... He was beautiful. So beautiful. A contented smile playing on his lips, he closed his eyes and inhaled slowly, catching a scent of Will. The younger man ran his fingers over his chest, his fingertips drawing shapes into the shirt that sat just above his skin...

The touch was something far more powerful than any other sensation that he had felt before. Just lying here with William, just lost in each other's embrace... It was something beyond beauty. Just lying there in the silence, their arms around each other, their breathing and their heartbeats in sync... It was like they had become on person all over again. Just lying there with his love... Just being there with his Will... It was beautiful. And these lazy mornings... They were something that Hannibal wouldn't give up for anything else in this cold world.

He wasn't sure how long they had stayed there, just like that, a tangle of limbs and bodies, the place where one stopped and the other started indistinguishable. It felt like a million years as they were there, but like it was mere seconds when it was over. But after awhile, William let out a small groan and pulled himself away.

"We should check on the kids." Will groaned, pulling himself out of bed.

Reluctant, Hannibal pulled himself up after Will, peeling off his day-old shirt and slipping into a new one, an older shirt that wasn't quite so classy or refined as his typical wardrobe, and a pair of khakis. Hardly his typical attire, but it was far more comfortable than his typical suits. And he didn't feel like he needed to dress up or put on a costume for Will. He could just breathe. Relax.

Fingers lacing through Will's as they headed downstairs, Hannibal wondered if this would begin a new routine. Rather than fear or loneliness, perhaps Will would be his new normal. Domestic bliss could be theirs. Domestic life had never been quite Hannibal's style, but with William David Michael Graham... It was the only thing that he wanted. Nothing special. Nothing crazy. Just a normal life with him. As long as it was by Will's side, Hannibal could do anything. Even if it was live a normal life.

Abigail was curled up against Alexander under a blanket. His arm was slinked around her waist, holding her close. They had the TV turned on some Netflix show, though Hannibal wasn't quite sure what, and he wasn't quite sure that he cared all that much. Their clothes were rumpled and messy, but more indicative of sleep than sex. Not that it mattered either way. It wasn't anyone's business but theirs. And from what Abigail had told him, Alex was a fine young man. Alexander looked like your typical teenage boy. Long, shaggy brown curls, a hint of stubble. Plain, but handsome. Quite in the same way as Abigail was plain but pretty. They weren't particularly striking or head-turning at first glance, but they were both appealing in their own ways.

"Good morning." Hannibal greeted politely.

"Morning." Will followed up, his greeting far more groggy than Hannibal's.

"Morning Dad. Dr. Lecter." Abigail greeted Will.

"Are these your dads?" Alexander inquired, turning to Abigail. Hannibal felt his lips turn upward in an unwilling smile. Dads. He quite liked the sound of that.

"Well, the scraggly one is. Hannibal is his boyfriend. But he's not my dad." Abigail replied.

"Hmm." Alexander hummed.

"Not yet." Will muttered, pushing back hurt curls.

Never had two words caused his heart to hammer so hard. Not yet. That meant.... It was a promise, a vow, in its own way. Hannibal wasn't the only one who felt like this was going somewhere truly beautiful. He wasn't the only one confident that this was going to last. He wasn't the only one who knew that he had met the love of his life the moment that his phone rang for the first time. Hannibal Lecter was going to have some form of happily ever after with this man. Will Graham was his happy ending. They both knew it. It was like they were meant for each other.

Not yet. Those two words. A promise. A vow. A solemn swear. Not yet.

He shook off his giddy nerves, turning back to the kids. They hardly seemed to notice his thousand acre smile, or the way that his heart was starting to beat a little bit faster in his chest. Not yet. Not yet. Not yet. Will Graham was promising him his future in the most casual of ways, and Hannibal couldn't help but feel excitement running through him. It felt so juvenile and silly, like he was a kid pining for affection from a crush... But he didn't care. All of that self control and elegance and eloquence that he had established over the years came to shambles when it came to Will, and he found himself far too excited, far more excited than what he should've been.

"Do you two want some breakfast?" Hannibal inquired as he made his way toward Will, who had firmly planted himself in front of the fridge. He let an arm slink around Will's waist, lips pressing against his neck like he'd done this a thousand times before. And perhaps he would do this a thousand more times. Will leaned back against him, eyes closing for a moment as he hummed with content. This could be their future together. Abigail in front of the television

with a boy she loved, maybe someday a man that she would call her husband, maybe a child of her own. And Hannibal would have his arms around Will, as casual and frequent as waking up in the morning, as eating, as breathing. Perhaps Will Graham would become the oxygen in his lungs. Perhaps he would get a happy ending with man.

Perhaps he'd be the first face he saw in the morning and the last face he saw at night. Perhaps he would be the person whose body he memorized in his fingertips, every inch of him remembered, every inch of him noted and appreciated and worshiped. Hannibal Lecter would worship and praise and love and cherish and adore Will Graham with all that was in him. He didn't need anyone else. In comparison, the whole world was nothing more than a flock of sheep, stupid and unworthy of his time, really. Perhaps that was arrogant of him. But Will Graham was the only person that he saw as truly equal, perhaps. The only person that he would lay down his life for. And he barely even knew this man. But he didn't care. Hannibal Lecter was in love.

"That sounds really good, thank you." Abigail called back, responding to the breakfast question.

Will pulled out a carton of milk and sat it down on the counter before slipping out of Hannibal's grasp, pressing his lips up against his cheek for a moment before walking to the cupboard where the glasses were kept. Hannibal let a small smile spread over his lips as he reached into the fridge and grabbed a few things before turning back and starting the oven... Oh, this was most certainly something that he could get used to.

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down and a vest, along with a pair of gray suit pants, he hurriedly dressed himself. Alexander and Abigail had gone down to the lobby for some privacy, but he didn't try to guess what they were doing. It didn't matter, and it was no one's business. William, however, had elected to stay in the entertainment room with the dogs, who had been asleep in various areas, either the couch or the floor or beneath the harpsichord.

As he pulled on his vest and his tie, watching himself carefully in the mirror, he heard the sound drifting up from the floor below him. It was a sweet sound, alive and joyous, beautiful. Harpsichord. Hannibal owned four harpsichords, one on each floor. He loved playing, loved the sound. He could hear the keys striking, the sounds not quite beautifully composed, but played in a way that seemed more amateurish. Like the person playing them had never played before. Like they knew how to dabble on the piano, but had never touched a harpsichord. Will.

He quickly adjusted his belt and buttoned his suit, pushing his damp hair out of his face. He hurried toward the door, feeling a smile growing on his lips. He felt so stupidly giddy around Will. It was like he was breathing for the first time, like he didn't know what he'd been missing until he met Will Graham. He smiled to himself as he hurried down the stairs to find Will sitting at his harpsichord. He was striking the keys lightly, playing out the tune of some song... Hotel California. Hannibal knew it. He wasn't sure how he knew it, but he knew it. Recognized the tune.

Will looked up as he stepped in the room, but Hannibal gave a vague hand gesture, signalling him to continue. He obeyed, fingers striking the keys slowly, fingers stumbling over each other, like he didn't really know what he was doing, not entirely. Hannibal situated himself on the bench behind Will, sitting with his body pressed against him, so close, so close. Hannibal's strong hands found their way over Will's, taking the lead and showing him how to play properly, though his hands missed notes and struck the wrong keys so many times that he eventually just retracted his hands.

Hannibal started to remove his hands, following suit after Will, not having much of a desire to play when he could be doing far better things with his hands. He could be running them through Will's curls, or holding his hands, or tracing his outline, memorizing every inch of him, memorizing the way that he felt. But as soon as he started to move his hands, Will let out a small whine, barely noticeable, but he obviously didn't want him to stop playing. So his hands found his way to the keys again, allowing himself to show off, striking the keys quickly, playing the melody with precision.

Hannibal had always been one to play by ear, and the sound of Will's light tapping of the keys had brought the memory of the tune back into his mind. He found the rhythm, found the melody, found the keys. His sacrifice of touch was well worth it as Will started to sway lightly to the rhythm. The way that his body rocked slightly, the way that he looked truly at peace. His fingers moved in time to the music, playing, like he was stimming, but only lightly, more of a way to move the feelings from the depths of his soul to the outside world than a way to calm down from panic. He hummed along slightly, slowly.

"Sing for me, my love." Hannibal whispered, almost begging just to hear his voice.

"I can't sing." Will replied with a small chuckle, not even opening his eyes.

"Please." Was all that Hannibal could respond.

Head shaking, he eventually relented, deciding that it might be okay. Eyes closed, voice shaky and soft, barely over a whisper, he let the words escape his lips, like he knew the words by heart, like this was some secret that he'd hidden away in his soul, these words something sacred, like they were bringing back thoughts and memories from another life. It was quite possibly the sweetest sound that Hannibal had ever heard in his life, the music enveloping the two of them, holding them together in a way that almost felt supernatural, almost felt heavenly. His voice whispering, singing, Hannibal pressed his lips against the side of Will's neck, his fingers striking the keys with elegance and precision as his voice sang out through the room and through Hannibal's veins...

"Welcome to the Hotel California
Such a lovely place
Such a lovely face
Plenty of room at the Hotel California
Any time of year
You can find it here..."

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"Can we just stay here? Like this? Forever? You and I?" Will whispered.

Will was fully underneath of Hannibal's weight, being held down in the way that he had been the night before, the way that he liked so much. The pressure, the embrace, it was comforting for both of them. Knowing that Hannibal was bringing him peace and being able to hold so tightly to his love.... It was utterly peaceful in a way that he hardly knew how to put into words.

"I would love it if you did. But the eye of the hurricane cannot last. We will have to face the storm eventually. But I fully intend to be holding your hand when it does." Hannibal replied quietly.

"And what storm is that?"

"Return to normal life. Sundays do not last forever, you know. We will have to return to school, return to our jobs. We will have to be separate, you and I, if only for a bit of time. And it will be painful after this, after not having been apart for this long... But I fully intend on coming home to you every evening, and waking up to you every morning, if that's okay. I want your face to be the first and last thing I see everyday. Is that okay?"

"And what about our other storm?"

"Ah... Garrett Jacob Hobbs."

"We can't hide here forever. He'll find us eventually. What happens then?"

"I will protect you with my life. Just like this. I will always keep you safe. I will be here, over you, holding you in my embrace and refusing to let go. I will be bulletproof for you, my
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love."

Will hummed slightly with content, nuzzling his face into the crook of Hannibal's neck, his fingers pressed up against the flat of his chest... Closing his eyes, Hannibal let his native tongue slip back into place, the words rolling off of his tongue at the memory, the lines blurring between past and present, memory and reality, in a beautiful display of what could only be described as the universe itself, as if for a moment, between eyes open and closed, between sleeping and waking moments, he understood everything in the universe.

"Sveiki atvykę į Hotel California
Tokia miela vieta
Toks mielas veidas
Daug tuo Hotel California
Bet kuriuo metų laiku
Jūs galite rasti jį čia."

Yellow Sky

And the sky burned with fire.

He didn't question it. It all made sense. It scared him, but it didn't make him think that anything was wrong or out of place. It was like this is how it had always been. Burning skies, clouds blackened with smoke, the very air suffocating with heat. Will's hands were trembling as he stood there, watching the sky burn before him. His instinct was to run, to find Abigail, and to find cover. Find safety. He had to protect Abigail.

The cold, dead fingers curled around his shoulder, gripping him tightly, nails as sharp as blades digging through his clothes, down through his flesh, through the blood and muscle, down to the bone, down to the core of his existence. He couldn't cry out in pain, couldn't make a noise at all. He felt everything crashing down on him, caving in, like the world itself was crumbling, imploding, all around him... The devil himself was standing with him, nails like knives, breath like ice against the bare of neck... Will felt everything in him trembling at the touch, this touch a sensation that he had only felt once - on his knees, begging for mercy, begging to be set free... The cold of his hands, the fire burning furiously just beneath the ice...

The sky outside was burning. The city that he had grown so accustomed to was crumbling, skyscrapers turning to nothing more than mountains of dust and ashes. Watching something so magnificent, as beautiful as this city, burn to the ground... Will Graham didn't like the city. He never had. He would much rather be in a cabin in the woods, somewhere isolated, somewhere he couldn't be touched, somewhere where people couldn't find him, make his life hell. But even he couldn't deny the beauty of the city. He oftentimes found himself out walking the length of it while Abigail slept and he could not, just admiring the lights and the sounds... It was overwhelming, but comforting. But now, the yellow sky burning with fire, the light clouded by smoke, the smell intoxicating, the skyscrapers and buildings crumbling to the ground... There was nothing beautiful about it. It was not a beautiful city that even the dimmest, most broken of souls could appreciate... This was nothing more than the pits of Hell, manifested in his own world.

He could feel the heat on his face, the heat of the fire, the heat of the blazes that he could not escape. And yet, he was cold. So cold. So, so cold. It was perhaps colder than he had ever been, a chill that perhaps had once been confined to the outer regions of the atmosphere, a cold only known in the void of space. But here it was, right in there center of hell, right in the center of his chest, spreading to every limb, every fingertip, every toe... So cold... Colder than he had ever been. It was a chill that could not be warmed by burning the whole world down, or setting oneself on fire... It was a deeper cold than that. This was the cold of being entirely consumed. It was having a heart made of dark snow, bones made of ice. It could not be melted, it could not be warmed. Will Graham was helpless here. Will Graham could not be saved here.

"See?"

See... See... See... That was the only word that Garrett Jacob Hobbs had said the entire time that he had... Violated Will. He had grabbed him by the hips, thrusting in hard and fast and violent while Will tried to get away, tried to move or squirm or something, anything to be freed of his touch. But he couldn't. Garrett was too strong, Will was too weak... So he had just sat there and took it, begging and screaming and pleading for mercy at first before quietly resigning to a steady stream of tears, trying to keep quiet, in part for Abigail's sake, in part for the sake of his burning throat. He just kept saying that god awful word. "See?" See what I can do to you... See what I have done... See, this is the way the human body works you senseless robot... See... See... See...

Those nails like ice-picks plucked from his skin in a quick succession, one after the other, leaving spurting blood, hot and thick and red, the spell of metal mingling with the smell of smoke and fire and death, the sound of his own skin tearing just beneath his ear mingling with the sounds of screams of horror and fire crackling... Still, Will could not call out, could not make a sound, could not let out a cry of pain or agony or anything else. All he could do was stand there, staring out into the burning pits of hell....

"This is all that is left for you, William? See what I am going to do to you? See?"

Will woke screaming.

He thought that his nightmares were over. He thought that in Hannibal's embrace, he could never be hurt again. He thought that this was over. But as he bolted up panting and wheezing and trembling, his entire body racked with pain and lungs shriveling up inside of his chest, he supposed that he was wrong. He grasped at the sheets, clutching them tightly beneath his fingers, holding onto them like he was holding on for dear life, like if he let go he might tumble off the edge of the earth, back into the hell that was his dream.

"Will, Will, William, it's okay. I'm here. I have you." The familiar voice whispered, whispering vows and promises that were more than enough to calm his restless spirit.

Hannibal was holding him again, pulling him back front the brink, though he was still close. He felt the tears in his eyes and the shaking in his bones, everything feeling like he was falling apart. He was close to screaming again, close to letting out a cry of absolute terror. He was horrified. Absolutely horrified. His body was quivering, every inch of him shaking, unable to stop, unable to breathe, unable to calm down. But then there was Hannibal, holding him close, waiting for him to calm down, trying everything that he knew, trying everything that he could, to calm him down. And eventually, it brought him down enough for him to form words.

"It was him. It was him." He panted, limbs shaking as Hannibal pulled him closer, holding him as tightly as he could without fully crushing him.

"I have you. He won't touch you. You're mine. You belong to me, and I belong to you. He does not own you any longer William. He was selfish. He believed himself to be the master of you, but was unwilling to sacrifice himself to you in return. I am not that man. I would die for you, William. I would die for you daily if it meant keeping you safe. But you belong to me, and I to you, and I have no intent of letting any man take what is mine."

"Hannibal... Hannibal."

"Hush, hush, my love. I have you."

Will's fingers grasped at Hannibal's arms, clawing at them frantically, not trying to get them off of him, but rather just trying to get a grip on them. Holding onto him in some way was calming. He wanted to be able to hold onto Hannibal just as much as he was holding onto him. He wanted to have some amount of control, even if it was just a phantom. He was trying not to hyperventilate, but was starting to fail, flashes of the nightmare coming back in front of his eyes.

"Abigail... Abigail, where is she?" He begged.

"She's downstairs. She's with Alexander. You remember Alexander, yes? I believe that he cares for her a great deal. He will protect her in the same way that I protect you. There are people who love both of you, William. You have people who would gladly lay down their lives for you. Both of you. You're not alone anymore, William."

"I... I... I..."

Hannibal shifted, hands never leaving him. He appropriated himself just in front of Will, so that they were making hard eye-contact. Will wasn't quite sure how, but in his panic, he made eye-contact with the man that he loved so desperately. His hands wrapped around the older man's tightly, holding onto him like he was holding on for dear life, like he was terrified to let go, Hannibal holding onto him just as tightly. His fingers wrapped around Will's hands for a moment before trailing up his arms, over his shoulders, down over his chest... The touch, rhythmic and slow and calming, calmed him down tremendously, hand lying just over his bare chest, just above where his heart lay hammering in his chest. The other hand found his side, careful, just barely touching him.

"Breathe, Will." Hannibal whispered.

It took a few moments, but he finally found himself calmer as he followed Hannibal's instruction, breathing in time to Hannibal. Mimicking him, copying his breath. Hannibal purposely made an effort to breathe deeply enough to be visible so that Will could follow suit, finding a time that let him stop hyperventilating, stop panting, stop panicking the way that he did. Will's hands had found their way to Hannibal's chest, just so that he could feel the tempo of his breathing... He ran his fingers over Hannibal's bare chest, through the layer of hair that coated it. He really was beautiful. Beautiful in a way that made him want to do more than just look. Not fuck... Just... Something more than look. Touch. Feel. Smell. Taste. Listen. All in the most innocent of ways.

He felt himself slowly calm down, falling back into reality, falling back into the way things were before, the way that they were meant to be. He still didn't feel well, still felt undeniably shaky, still felt as if his body was betraying him, not allowing him control. He didn't have control over his mind, over his body, over anything. But he was slowly regaining it, slowly fighting his way back to his usual self. He pushed himself forward, leaning heavily into Hannibal's chest, inhaling him, trying to hold onto him, trying to memorize him. The way he smelled. The way he sounded. The way he felt.

Will didn't know how long they sat there like that, just sitting there as Hannibal whispered words of peace, words that he couldn't quite catch, words in some language that Will didn't know, didn't understand. But they were words that made him feel like he was floating. They soothed his heavy heart and the aching in his chest and the thoughts racing in his mind that he couldn't keep up with. They silenced his demons. He calmed the hell that his mind had become. But after awhile, once Will finally calmed down and recomposed himself, Hannibal pulled away, hands staying on Will's shoulders, not letting him go but making it so that they could look each other in the eye.

"I'm going to get Abigail. I feel as though it would do you some good to have a bit of time with her right now. I am not, nor can I ever be, everything to you. Abigail will always hold a crucial role in your life, and in calming you down after episodes like this. Will you be alright if I go downstairs?" Hannibal whispered.

"Don't wake her up. I'm okay." Will sighed, not wanting to disturb his daughter.

"I doubt that she's asleep."

"Why?"

"They're watching a movie. I can hear it playing."

"I don't want to interrupt her."

"William... I hardly think that she'll mind. I wish to talk to her anyways. Only briefly. Okay?"

Will eventually just sighed and nodded. He hated interrupting Abigail, or really doing much of anything that might cause her inconvenience. She was a good kid. She had raised herself, and she had turned out just fine somehow, without guidance and without parental supervision. She had figured it out all on her own. She really didn't need Will other than to just be there for her. She was an independent spirit. But she had been to hell and back, and he wanted to give her a good life. A good remainder of her childhood. He wanted her to be happy. He didn't want to burden her any more, didn't want to be the weight on her shoulders. She had already been through so much. But sometimes... He needed Abigail, and Hannibal knew that.

Will watched as he stood up slowly, pulling himself off of the bed. He watched as he turned toward a chair and grabbed a shirt, pulling it on over his head. His movements were elegant and slow and graceful, his movements still tired and full of sleep, but he still looked beautiful. Will watched as he moved, every movement beautiful, every movement lovely, every movement savored.

"Can I come with you?" Will whispered.

Hannibal nodded slightly before extending a hand for him. He took his hand, those warm, familiar hands, the hands that brought him so much comfort. Hannibal helped him out of the bed, helped him to his shaky feet. Wobbly legs and shaking body, every inch of him still trembling, still unable to hold his own weight entirely. Hannibal's arms wrapped around him tighter, holding him tightly around the waist. Will wrapped his arm around Hannibal's neck

and tried his best to keep himself upright, though he found himself still shaky as they headed toward the stairs.

"Are you okay?" Hannibal whispered tentatively.

Will just nodded as he regained enough balance to walk down the stairs himself. They headed down the stairs quickly, fingers tangled together, those familiar hands perhaps being the only things that kept him standing, that kept him sane. Abigail quickly came into view, sitting on the couch, curled beneath a blanket, and totally alone.

"Abigail." Will squeaked, voice hoarse and shaky and small.

The room was dark, the only light coming from the TV. She didn't turn around, just pulling in tighter, barely even acknowledging their existences. She just sat there, eyes adverted... She looked upset. She looked the way that she did after they left. There was something sad about her, but Will didn't know what to do about it. God, he was so bad at this. He was so bad at helping and consoling and... He couldn't see past himself... He could barely... God, he was such a horrible parent. Such a horrible father...

"Where is Alexander?" Hannibal inquired.

"I don't know. I... We were fooling around. It wasn't... We don't... We haven't had sex. But we were kissing and messing around. And... I.... I... I, uh... I reached down his pants. I barely did anything. I hardly touched him. But he panicked and ran out. I don't know. I don't know what I did wrong. It wasn't intentional. I'm... Hey, what's wrong?"

"Nothing." Will blurted out.

"No. I'm sorry about Alexander... But your father had a nightmare. And a bad one, at that. I think that you are better suited to help him through this. You will forever be infinitely more important to him than I am. You're his child. But... I thought your presence may help." Hannibal protested, explaining.

"Yeah, sure, of course." Abigail replied quickly, bolting off the couch.

Will wanted to say something. Wanted to tell her that he was fine. Wanted to tell Hannibal how important he was. Wanted to say something ANYTHING. But all that he could do was stand there. He couldn't will his vocal chords to move, couldn't make a noise, couldn't say a thing. But as Abigail's arms found their way around him...

Abigail and Hannibal. The two people he felt the most love in the world for. Right there with him, the two of them, showing him a love that he rarely felt, a love that perhaps he had never felt before... And for once in his tragic life, perhaps everything in the world was right.

Danger Line

Will was tucked tightly into bed, the covers rolled so tightly around him that it almost looked painful. How he liked it like that, Hannibal wasn't sure. It looked like it would be suffocating. But that was how he fell asleep. It was three thirty in the morning, and he had fallen asleep on the couch, curled between Abigail and Hannibal and looking more content than anyone else in the world. It was like they had been through a small storm, their ship had been rocked, but they were okay, and perhaps closer than before. Seeing Will so terrified shattered his heart, but getting to be the one with the honor of healing it was something that Hannibal wouldn't trade for the world.

He was about to curl onto the bed next to his sleeping lover when a small hand wrapped around his shoulder. Familiar warmth against his skin, a feeling that he had prayed he would soon get used to. He wanted nothing more than to love Abigail like his own daughter, take in both of them. Be a happy little family. But, as in love as he undoubtedly was with Will, he had yet to find himself loving, truly loving, Abigail. He was well on his way, of course. He adored her, wanted the best for her. But love took time. With one exception, the man who slept in his bed, tucked so very tightly under his blankets... Love always took time. He had to take his time.

"My dad has anxiety meds that he needs to take. They're really important. But I think... When you came by to get us, I think he got over eager. I think... I think he thinks that you're his cure. That you're the fix to all his problems. And maybe that's true to some extent, but evidently not entirely." Abigail explained bluntly.

Blunt. Strong. Her voice was hardly a whisper, barely audible, and yet he could still the strength and overall concern in it. Loving Abigail Hobbs was not going to be a difficult task. She was not his daughter, but he could see himself in her. A certain sternness. A certain darkness, perhaps. Both of them had witnessed horrors that left them scarred. Both of them had been abused by their biological fathers. He didn't know why he felt a connection to Abigail, didn't know why he felt a connection to Will. He didn't know how this little family had somehow so quickly become his. And perhaps that was what he was thinking in the pauses, the breaks in her words, the places where she stopped to inhale another breath. But when her mouth started moving, his mind shot back to the situation at hand. Will.

"He left them at your home, then?" Hannibal replied, not missing a beat.

"I guess. He's an idiot sometimes. I didn't want to say anything while he was awake. But yeah. He... He needs routine. Really needs it. But he's breaking it now. You're helping him. Like... I don't think he needs it as much when you're with him. But he's getting carried away. I..."

"I'm sorry." Was all Hannibal could spit out.

"Don't be. You're helping him. He's happier than I've seen him in ages. He... He still needs the help though. We can't always fight the demons in his head, right? I mean... My dad is so full

of demons. He just needs a little help. Something to keep them at bay. You already help. Maybe the meds, combined with you... Maybe the anxiety will go away."

"Thank you... Thank you, Abigail. But I'm still unsure where you are planning on going with this. It's 3 in the morning. Can't this wait?"

"Yes, but it doesn't need to. I don't have anything better to do, and I have no plans of sleep any time soon. I have some things at home I want anyways. I'm going to go get his meds, alright? I'll be back in 20 minutes. I just need to go get them."

"Abigail, it's 3 in the morning. It can wait."

"He needs his meds, Hannibal."

"And it can wait."

"It doesn't need to. They calm him down. It'll keep him from having another panic attack... I'm going to go get them before he wakes up, okay? I just... If he wakes up with a panic attack again, I want to have something that will calm him down. Is that enough for you?"

"You and I can calm him down."

"Temporarily, Hannibal. I just... I want to make sure that he'll be okay."

She didn't waste a second. She pivoted toward the doorway, toward the stairs, like she was ready to go. She wore disheveled shorts and a tank top that was pulled down much too far. Her hair was a mess, her eyes clouded with sleep. She was in no condition to be driving. Especially not somewhere so dangerous. There was a chance, if slim, that there would be something waiting for her in her home. Something deadly.... A monster named Garrett Jacob Hobbs. The devil himself, as far as Will was concerned.

She was the daughter of the devil. The biological child of him. Half of her was half of him. Her father's blood was her blood, her father's flesh was her flesh. But that didn't seem to matter to her. Hannibal could see the resentment of her father in her eyes. She hated him, despised him. And Hannibal didn't blame her for a second. But she was walking into a war zone, walking into a battlefield where there may or may not be a surprise attack. Garrett could be there. Hobbs could be just waiting there, waiting for them to return... He couldn't let Abigail go alone.

"Wait." Hannibal called out.

"What?" She replied, turning back toward him, pivoting on a heel.

"I'll go. It'll be safer."

"I'm perfectly capable, Dr. Lecter."

"I don't doubt that, Abigail. But you forget that you're in hiding. You aren't safe. I can defend myself, and even if I cannot, your father would be unable to forgive himself if something

happened to you. I would be unable to forgive myself if something happened to you. Just let me go."

"You sure?"

"Of course. Yes. I... Yes."

Abigail just nodded and headed down the stairs, no longer having this sense of determination in her step, which Hannibal was grateful for. As beautiful as he found determination and persistence and selfless strength, he didn't want the man he loved to lose his daughter. He didn't want to lose Abigail. He couldn't lose Abigail. If Will lost her... He would never heal. Abigail would always be much more to Will than Hannibal ever would be, ever could be. They had known each other for a matter of days. They didn't... Hannibal loved Will. He didn't know why or how, but he fell in love the moment that he laid eyes on Will Graham. But Will would always love Abigail vastly more than he would ever love Hannibal. And it was okay. Abigail was his daughter.

As she disappeared into the stairwell, Hannibal took in a breath and turned toward his sleeping lover, the man he was so crazy about. He was curled so tightly in on himself that it almost looked painful, holding himself in fetal position. Hannibal wanted to wrap himself around him, hold him so tightly that he could finally relax, not have to clench every single muscle in his body so tightly. But he couldn't. Instead, Hannibal walked toward his closet and pulled out a pair of suit pants and a dress shirt. Nothing overly fancy, just his regular attire, classy and refined but not overly fancy. He pulled it on, stripping himself of his drawstring pajama bottoms and pulling on his clothes.

He suddenly heard the man in his bed, their bed, stir. He froze, fear suddenly taking him over. He was going to wake up and begin screaming again, his nightmares getting the better of him. But instead, he barely did anything. He shifted slightly in bed, and let out a small moan before muttering something small beneath his breath.

"President John Adams had a dog named Satan."

And then he was back into his sleep.

Hannibal furrowed his eyebrows for a moment before stifling a laugh. It was another one of his random dog facts. Will admitted to not knowing why he knew these things, about the dogs of famous people and historical figures. He just knew them, after reading about dogs for all of those years. Neither of them were sure why he loved dogs so much. He just did. Dogs, fishing, and neuroscience, apparently. Neuroscience was the most interesting to Hannibal, but he let Will talk about whatever he wanted to talk about at any given time. So far, for the past days that they had spent together, it was mostly dogs. Hannibal was waiting for him to bring up neuroscience, and he supposed that he would see that eventually. Most likely after one of Will's lectures on the topic. Neuroscience and psychoanalysis were Will's two main points that he talked about when he gave lectures. Perhaps he would talk about it to him someday.

Hannibal watched as his sleepy lover curled back in on himself, acting as if nothing had happened. Perhaps he was unaware that anything had happened. Perhaps he was unaware of his habit of spewing facts in his sleep. Perhaps, in sleep, when his brain wasn't running a

million miles an hour, when he couldn't feel the earth spinning beneath his feet, when everything wasn't quite so overwhelming... Perhaps he was unaware of the terror that rained outside of his own mind.

"Miegoti gerai , mylimasis."

~

Hannibal didn't own a gun. Had never even fired one. It lacked finesse. He had never killed a man, but his weapon of choice would've been something classier. A knife, a scalpel. Something surgical. Guns seemed cold, distant, like the weapon of choice for a man who perhaps was not one to get too close. Someone cold and impersonal. Someone almost afraid to take the life of another. Hannibal Lecter was not afraid to take the life of another, and he most certainly would not be shy about it when he did it. He would not shy away. Perhaps that was why he kept a blade strapped to each leg. That way, in the worst case scenario, he was prepared.

The rain was pouring, and it felt cliche, really. Walking into a battlefield in the pouring rain in the middle of the night. He took in a breath, trying to keep himself calm. He wasn't even sure anyone would be there. But there was a chance, and that chance couldn't exactly be labelled as slim. The man stalking his family, the man that had once claimed himself king of the two people that Hannibal had found himself loving more than anything else in the world, was seeking vengeance. Garrett Jacob Hobbs was a dangerous man, and Hannibal had no doubt that he was going to do whatever it took to get what he wanted. And Hannibal was not about to give them up.

He was going to get in, go into the kitchen where his pills were waiting beside the refrigerator, take them, and leave. Simple as that.

The door creaked open slowly, feeling melodramatic, but Dr. Lecter was never one to shy away from a flare for the dramatic. He reached in slowly and flicked on the light, the low hum of the lights filling his ears as light flooded through the small home, a cozy two-bedroom home. It was his lover's home. It was the girl he might call his daughter's home. It was a home that was filled with thoughts and memories, a home filled with fear and a home filled with love, a home filled with panic attacks and declarations of love. It was a home... And it had been stolen away from them.

Hannibal slipped in slowly, closing the door quietly behind him. Nothing seemed out of place at first. Will's chair still sat in front of the window. The place where they had sat and hugged, the place where Hannibal had professed his love for the first time, seemed undisturbed. Nothing seemed out of place as he stepped inside, assessing the situation, trying to evaluate, trying to make sure that it was okay. That he was going to be safe. He had two very important people to come home to, after all.

Hands tensed around each other as he slipped further inside, stepping across the threshold. Perhaps it would be better if he were here with Will. If none of this had happened. If they could just go back to the way it was before Will sent that text, telling him that it wasn't going to work out, perhaps it could've been better. Perhaps Will would be curled on the couch with Abigail, surrounded by their dogs, watching a movie on the couch. Abigail would be teasing

as Will texted rather than called because talking was too hard. Hannibal would be in his own home, anxiously waiting for the morning to come because he would finally get to see his lover again. Get to hold him in his arms again. Press his lips into his again. They could have a more normal experience, dating rather than immediately moving in together, rather than professing love in days rather than months... Perhaps one day Hannibal would've carried his lover across the threshold, but instead, this home would hold nothing but nightmares and they would have to create their own home. But that didn't stop the bitterness from knowing that domesticity, normalcy, it was destroyed by Garrett Jacob Hobbs.

Fuck him.

Hannibal shook his head, trying to stop the bitterness, the thoughts that were flooding through his head now. He slipped his fingers into his pockets as he stepped into the kitchen, practically feeling the ghosts that lived here. Maybe Abigail sat and did her homework at that table. Perhaps Will would sit and read at the island. Maybe they would cook together, cook small and familiar meals that they had eaten too many times over. Maybe there was a day when Will's arms wrapped tighter around Abigail than what Hannibal could ever give him, this bond between them that would always be stronger than the bond that Hannibal would ever form with either of them. They had survived hell together. They were victims, and they were bonded over that. Hannibal could just hope to be integrated into their little family.

Hannibal stepped further in. This home didn't really feel like a home as he walked around it. A home would have been personalized by now. But it didn't feel like that. It didn't feel like either one of them, neither Will nor Abigail. It just felt like a house, fully designed based on functionality, not comfort. It wasn't home. Hannibal's house would not be a home without certain things, things he put there because it felt like part of him. His harpsichords on each floor, so he could play whenever he wanted without ever having to walk too far. The theremin that he cherished so deeply that he kept at the foot of his bed, the theremin that he would perhaps teach Will to play, hold him close and touch him gently as he'd guide his hands. His kitchen, arranged just so, so he'd always feel a certain amount of comfort as he prepared the food, the food that he loved to prepare almost as much as he loved to serve. It was his home. But Will's house didn't feel quite like a home. It felt like it hadn't been lived in.

It felt almost solemn, almost sad. Like neither of them had been able to make this house their home because of all that they had been through. Perhaps they had been afraid of making a home together, perhaps knowing in their innermost subconscious that they would never be able to keep this up. Maybe they both knew that this couldn't last, that this couldn't be sustained. Maybe they didn't think that they could ever have a home again. Perhaps Hannibal could make a home for them with him. But as he stood there, fingers grazing over the kitchen table, eyes washing over the room, he felt a sense of sadness for his lover.

Until he saw it. Then that sadness turned to horror.

Standing in the living room, he found it engraved in the wall. He knew that he wasn't supposed to be in here, that his mission lied in the kitchen, but he hadn't been able to resist. But now he wished that he had just turned back, just ran. Too late now. It was small, barely bigger than his hand, but he knew what it meant. Will had muttered that word in his sleep,

and while he wasn't entirely sure what it meant, he knew that his lover's nightmares had come to life, and he was standing in the midst of it.

See?

See. See. See. Hannibal had heard him mutter that word so many times in his sleep that it was almost like a chant, this terrifying song of one word. See, see, see. What had it meant to him? What had the bastard done to him, using that word against him, turning a three letter word into a dagger, a blade sharp enough to cut him to the bone, cut him down to the core of him, until he was dreaming about that god-awful word.

The door swung open and Hannibal bolted around, hand bracing around the knife strapped to his left thigh. His breath shook as the door slowly creaked open, and he fully expected to have to fight for his life, fully expecting to be faced with the man that had hurt his William, the man that damaged his lover beyond repair. And there was no way in hell that Hannibal would let him get away. But as the door creaked open, he was greeted with a much friendlier face, a face that he could look at for the rest of his life, followed by another one that he fully intended on seeing everyday for the rest of his life. William and Abigail.

"Hannibal." Will breathed, not hesitating a moment before practically running toward him, arms reaching out and holding onto him.

"William." Hannibal whispered as he wrapped his arms back around the younger man, holding him tightly, a silent vow to protect him in that single word.

"I'm sorry, Dr. Lecter. I... I tried to get him to stay, but he woke up and wouldn't... He wanted you. I'm sorry." Abigail apologized.

"Don't apologize. Are you alright, Will?" Hannibal replied, pulling him out of his chest and looking down at him.

"I'm okay. I'm fine. I just... I woke up and you weren't there. I wanted you, Hannibal. I was... I was afraid that you wouldn't come home."

Almost forgetting about where they were, almost forgetting about what was happening, almost forgetting about that horrifying three letter word that was etched into the wall behind him, Hannibal just pulled him back into his chest. He ran his fingers slowly through his love's dark curls. Oh, he was so beautiful. In that moment, all he wanted was for the three of them to disappear, for the three of them to go somewhere safe, somewhere away from this harsh reality that they had found themselves in somehow.

"Aš myliu tave, mano mylimas. Mano meilė jums nežino ribų. Aš visada grįžta namo su jumis. Aš tave myliu, Will."

Will relaxed in his arms, like nothing was wrong in the world in that moment. Like nothing in the world could tear the two of them apart. They were inseparable, the two of them. And perhaps they always would be. Perhaps there was nothing in this world that could tear them apart. Perhaps their souls were intertwined, two halves of the same whole, their souls fitting together so perfectly...

"Let's go home." Hannibal whispered.

"I am home." Will mumbled into his chest.

"It doesn't have to be. You could live with me."

"I didn't mean the house. I'm home in your arms, Hannibal. I'm home whenever I'm with you."

Hannibal almost let out a laugh, not expecting the sentiment from his Will. He just let himself smile as he tugged the smaller man closer. They weren't too terribly far apart in height or weight or anything like that, but Will felt smaller in that moment. Or perhaps Hannibal just felt bigger. Maybe he felt strong, like he could be the protector of his beloved.

"Let me take you to my house, William. You're safe there. We're safe there. Let me protect you."

Will just nodded.

~

Hannibal poured two glasses of wine. It was nearing dawn, and Abigail had to be at school in a few hours, though she would likely be skipping today, and the next day, and the day after that, until Garrett Jacob Hobbs was safe behind prison bars. Messy sleep schedules, anxiety attacks, early morning wine... It was complicated, but this was how it was happening. This was their life now. Their life. This was what was happening, and whether it was through dances in the library or snuggling on the couch, he was going to make it as tolerable as possible until this was all over.

"You risked your life for me, you know." Will muttered as he took the wine glass from his hand.

"I'm well aware." Hannibal replied, leaning back against the counter.

"Why? I mean, it wasn't... It was something I could live without, but you still risked yourself, your own life, just... Just for... For these." He said, tossing his pill bottle in the air.

"Didesnės meilės Niekas neturi nei tai , kad žmogus savo gyvybę už draugus."

"You realize I can't understand you when you speak Lithuanian, right?"

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Hannibal chuckled.

"Is that what we are? Friends?"

"That, and much, much more. Friend, savior, lover, soulmate, whatever you need. Our relationship transcends labels, transcends words."

Hannibal raised a glass, their glasses clinking together with a small sound before he brought it to his lips. It was a familiar taste, one that he had grown to love. He watched Will as he took a long, low sip, eyes spaced out as they usually were. William rarely looked straight on at anything. He seemed to be too lost in his own head to stare directly at anyone or anything. He just stared out into space as he took a long sip, like he was thinking about doing something, like he was trying to decide on whether he should make some unidentified move or not.

"What do you think?" Hannibal inquired, gesturing to the wine.

"It's fine. It's good. I'm just more of a whiskey guy myself." He replied.

"I'll keep that in mind. Is there a specific brand you are fond of?"

"Plain old Jack Daniel's is fine with me. I've never really tried anything else."

"I suppose we'll have to change that, then."

Will smiled softly as he stared down into his drink, swishing it around in the glass, staring into the wine as it moved, appearing as if it were almost mesmerizing to him. Perhaps it was. Perhaps the simple movement, or the control that he had over it, was almost hypnotic to him. Or maybe he was just too deep in thought to look anywhere else. Maybe he was thinking about something, something that Hannibal couldn't read quite yet.

"He's watching us now. Garrett. I can feel him. I can feel his eyes. I know it. I've been feeling it since we left. This constant nagging in the back of my neck, like he's inches away from me, reaching out, just barely hovering above the skin... I know he's not there most of the time, it doesn't feel entirely real, but now... It's stronger. Like he's really watching us. He's watching us. He's watching me."

"I know." Was all that Hannibal could say.

Hannibal positioned himself in front of the window as he said that, acting as something as a human shield for his lover. Hannibal wasn't sure if Garrett Jacob Hobbs was really there, but he recognized the feeling, knew what he meant, the feeling of being watched. But he wasn't going to take the risk. If something was going to happen, Hannibal was going to take the blow. No one would take his William away from him. Hannibal's eyes ran over him, watching every single inch. The gentle movement of his hands. The twitch of his throat. The steady rhythm of his chest moving up and down...

Shattered glass. Silver bullets. Spilled wine all over the floor.

Blinding pain.

And as he fell to the floor, he saw the sun rising in the distance.

No Greater Love

Chapter Notes

TRIGGER WARNING: There's a pretty graphic, intense rape scene. It's not super hardcore or anything, but it's definitely non-con and I figured that I'd need to put a trigger warning considering that this made me really anxious just writing it. But you know. Angst. Plot. I'm a fucked up human being. I needed a way to work through my own issues and I project it onto the boys because I'm horrible.

Now you're gonna ask, oh, Daniel, were you raped? No. I was not raped, but I was sexually assaulted and abused for 3 months by my first "boyfriend" when I was 11 and he was 16, and stalked by a 30 year old pedophile when I was 12, and I just need to work through my issues, and writing is how I do that, and this is my fucking book. I'm a fucked up human and I need to unfuck myself as much as I can, and Will is very important to me, so I use him to work through my problems. I'm letting you read that. So don't. Fucking. Complain. About. It. I obviously don't condone rape, but I felt like I needed to work through my own problems. Sometimes writing it out and having the characters deal with the aftermath helps me deal with my own aftermath. So yeah.

But I'll put a ~ just before it starts and then again when it ends so you don't have to read it if you don't want to. Or you can read it. Do whatever you want, you godless heathens.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The glass shattered first. It was the first thing that Will was able to process.

Then there was red. So much red. At first, Will thought it was just the wine. And the wine was part of it, he knew that much. He could see the bottle shatter. The neck of it was still in Hannibal's hand, but the bottom shattered, spilling it over the carpet. God, that would be hard to clean. That was all that he could process in that minute. He could hardly process anything that was happening, couldn't entirely tell what was happening. It was all happening too fast. All he could do was stand there in horror and try his best to think straight. It wasn't happening.

Then he smelled the blood.

He felt sick.

He watched as his lover fell to the floor. Soul mate, lover, friend, savior, partner. Boyfriend. He was on the floor, and Will could smell blood. He looked down at himself, almost certain that it had to be his own, hoping to God that it was his own. But there was nothing on his white button-down. Nothing at all. He was fine.

The red was all over Hannibal.

All over Hannibal.

Drenching his side, mostly. But he was covered in red. Wine and blood.

His vocal chords froze. His mind was racing so fast that it felt like static. He had grown far too accustomed to the feeling. He was frozen. He couldn't breathe. He couldn't take it. He knew the feeling far too well. He was on the cusp of a panic attack, ready to freeze, to stop breathing. And the only person who could stop it right then was lying on the floor with a bullet somewhere through him. Oh god, a bullet. God, god, god.

Hannibal. His Hannibal. He was going to die.

The glass was shattered, making it easy to kick away what was left. That's what He did. He kicked in what was left of the glass, sending it spraying over Hannibal. God, Hannibal.

He cried out in pain as the shards went through his clothes, into his arms as he curled up.

"Hannibal." Was all that Will could get out, ignoring the man that was in the window. The man that was standing in front of him. His master. The man who made a slave out of him.

Hannibal was curled into a ball on the floor, losing that composure that he always had. But as Will watched, frozen in terror, hand grasping at his wine with a death grip, he slowly regained that composure that he knew so well, the composure that he had grown so accustomed to. He pulled himself up, shrugging off the suit jacket that he had been wearing, leaving him in that gray sweatshirt again. But it was stained with red now, looking black in the dim lighting.

And then it processed to him who was standing in front of him.

Garrett Jacob Hobbs.

Will's mind was racing so fast that he couldn't think straight, couldn't force the air into his lungs. He looked up slowly, eyes finding Garrett. The man that he had married, the man that he had grown to hate. The man who continued to haunt his nightmares. The man that he saw in the eyes of his daughter, the man that he saw in her. Once upon a time, Will would've found him beautiful. A sense of stability. A sense of friendship. A sense of companionship. But now all he saw was his rapist. All he could see now was the man who muttered that god-awful word over and over. *See, see, see.*

This is what I can give you. See?

This is what I will do to you. See?

This is what you will become. See?

This is your becoming. See?

And then he was staring down the barrel of a gun. That gun was held by the man from his nightmares. The man who still haunted his dreams, the man who would never go away. The man he despised. A fresh wave of fear zinged down his spine, body trembling as he stared

down the barrel of the gun, trying to piece fragments of thoughts together, unable to think, unable to breathe...

"Hi, Will." He greeted with a sinister smile.

Will wanted to run. Wanted to scream. Wanted to hide. Wanted to do something. But all that he could do was stare, stand in paralyzed fear, eyes darting back and forth between Hannibal and Garrett. The man he loved and the man he despised, the man who had his heart and the man who had tried to steal it, the man who cared for him and the man who cared for none but himself. The man who was lying in the floor, wounded and bleeding and dying, and the man who had put him there.

Will's eyes darted toward the stairs. Abigail was upstairs, asleep. Curled on the couch. Unaware of what was happening. Blissfully ignorant, sleeping peacefully, not worrying about the fact that her father was about to kill the men who had become her fathers. Perhaps she would wake up alone, an orphan. Perhaps she wouldn't wake up at all. She would be dreaming, perhaps about someone she loved, or perhaps about something silly, or perhaps she wouldn't be dreaming at all. Perhaps Garrett Jacob Hobbs was too cruel.

"Don't try to run, beautiful. I'll catch you. Don't want to make this harder than what it has to be." He chuckled, cocking his gun.

Will just gulped down hard and looked at Hannibal, trying to find some sort of consolation in him but finding nothing but more fear. God, he was hurt. He was hurt badly.

"You remember me, right? Haven't forgotten about what we had, right? Haven't left all we had for this prick, right? We had something, Will. I gave you a child. And what did you give me in return?" Garrett hissed.

"Don't listen to him, William." Hannibal choked out from his place on the floor, hand resting over the wound in his side.

"Shut up! I'm not afraid put a bullet through your head. I just don't want it to be over too soon." Garret screamed, turning toward Hannibal.

Will gulped down again, unsure of what to say. Unsure of what to do. He was frozen. Every inch of him shook. He couldn't think. Everything turned to static. Couldn't think. Couldn't breathe.

"What did you give me in return, Will? You couldn't even fulfill your job as a husband. As a lover. You failed me, Will. All of this. What I did to you? It was all your fault." Garrett growled, turning back to Will, voice somewhere between infuriated and sickly sweet.

"You knew he wasn't going to give you that when you married him." Hannibal piped up, like he was trying to come out as angry but coming out as hurt, almost pathetic, like a wounded animal.

"I SAID SHUT UP!" Garrett screamed, pointing the gun back to Hannibal.

"Don't. Don't touch him. Don't you fucking touch him." Will squeaked, trying to sound intimidating, trying to pull his attention away from the good doctor.

Garrett's eyes found him again.

"So he speaks." Garrett chuckled, stepping forward.

"Don't touch him." Will breathed, a little stronger this time but not much.

Will just stared into the space behind Garrett, unable to force himself to look directly at him, afraid that he might fall apart if he did.

"You know, sometimes he'll go days without saying a word. Little shit. He'll just sit and stare into space sometimes. He never made eye-contact with me. Never. It's all terribly rude. And he refused to even, um, consummate the marriage, as you might call it. He refused. He wanted to sit in the hotel room and watch movies. Made me sit and jerk off instead of giving me the one fucking thing I asked for. No matter how well I treated him, he wouldn't give me the one fucking thing I asked for. Do you know why I stayed? Because I thought I could change him. I thought I could make him normal. He was just too... Delectable. Too cute. I thought I could fix him. But evidently, this little bitch refuses. I bet this is his game. Lure in men with the hopes of making him better, and then... Nothing." Garrett ranted, eyes darting back and forth between him and Hannibal.

"He does not need fixed. He owes you nothing." Hannibal growled.

"That's what I would've said. You've been together, what? A few weeks? You don't know that little fucker like I know him. He's great at first. You think his quirks, the weird things he does, the way that he rambles forever, that... That innocence... You think it's endearing. But he's a fucking child. You'll see. Fuck Aspergers, fuck autism. He's a fucking child. But you're not going to find out. Because he's mine." He laughed sickly.

"You evidently don't want him. You don't have to do this."

"Oh yes I do. He doesn't get away that easily. He's fucking mine. Til death do us fucking part. Remember when we said that, Will? And he's going to have to grow up. I'll make him grow the fuck up. And then I'm taking him and Abigail, and we're going to be a family again. We were a family once. Remember that Will? A family. Me, you, and Abigail. And we're going to have that again."

Garrett turned toward him and smiled, a smile so sick, so sinister. It sent chills down his spine, and all that he could do was stare at Hannibal, unsure of what to do. He couldn't breathe. He couldn't breathe. His chest was heaving now, hands trembling, legs barely able to hold him up. Hannibal was just lying there, eyes looking absolutely horrified, a certain pain in him as he stared, like he was trying his best to analyze and devise a plan but failing, what with all of the blood. The blood on his side, the blood covering the side of his face, shards of glass pressing into his skin, sticking out at odd, unpleasant angles. God, that would be hard to get out without hurting him. Maybe he could make it tolerable, but there would definitely be a lot of pain on Hannibal's end...

"We're going to have that. We're going to be a family again. You, me, Abigail... Just the three of us. We're going to be a family. Together again at last. Until death do us fucking part." Garrett hissed.

He stepped closer, gun falling to his side as he stepped closer. He had the same look on his face as he did when they had gotten married, eyes soft and warm and full of longing. But that look was deranged and twisted now, sinister, leaving Will with a sinking pit in his stomach as he came closer, hand reaching out and running a hand through his chocolaty curls, trying to pull his eyes into his, trying to force eye-contact, but unable. Will was still watching Hannibal, who was still curled up in the floor in pain, watching the two of them in horror.

"But first... We're going to finally consummate the fucking marriage."

There wasn't a moment of notice. His hands jerked roughly at his curls, tugging him forward and pulling a scream from his throat, voice shaking. His chest hurt, heart hammering so painfully in his chest that it made him want to fall to his knees again, just fall to fucking pieces, unable to pull himself together. Oh god. It was another replay of the night that they had left. Only this was worse. The first time, Garrett had just... Snapped. It wasn't planned, and something that might've been forgiven had Will elected to stay. He had been drunk and pissed off. But this... This was sober. This was planned. Garrett had been planning this.

He heard Hannibal call out after them, letting out an anguished scream, a scream torn from his throat that made Will want to fight, made him want to cry, made him want to do anything to make it better. But he couldn't do anything but follow, feet falling from beneath him as he skidded, trying to stop him but failing and falling pliant to his demands as he dragged him out of the room, pulling him toward the corridor. A corridor with bedrooms and spare rooms that Will hadn't even been in yet. Garrett dragged him down the long hall as Will made small noises, noises that sounded weak and pained and fucking pathetic.

He pulled him into the room furthest in the back, shoving the door open and closing it behind them. Will knew what was coming. He wasn't stupid. He wondered if he'd be able to fight back this time. But as Garrett shoved him to the ground and pointed the gun, he knew he wouldn't be able to fight back. He would never be able to win.

He flicked on the light and for a moment, Will was blinded. But as the room came into focus, fear took him again, but for another reason now.

The walls were red, a dark shade of maroon, and black. There was a large bed in the center of the room, and a large wooden X on the wall, and rows and rows of what looked like medieval torture devices. Will wasn't stupid, wasn't horribly naive. He knew what they were. He knew what it was used for. He knew that this was Hannibal's habit. This was how he got off. This was what he liked. This was Hannibal's guilty pleasure, the one he'd not lied about but hadn't gone into detail about. He hasn't said much about it, really. They hadn't talked much about sex since they'd started living together. A few passing jokes that Will had grown to be okay with. He hadn't mentioned this room though... So many things that could be caused to inflict pain. He knew Hannibal would never hurt him, but he wished he didn't own all of this stuff. Not because he had a problem with it. But because Garrett was going to use it against him. He could feel it.

"Oh, little asexual boy really knows how to pick 'em. Your boyfriend's kinkier than I am. You really know how to lure them in. You know, I almost think that you want to get raped. You like when this happens to you." Garrett laughed maniacally.

Will just gulped.

"Do you think this sick fuck really loves you? He wants the same thing I did. Except... Well... Now, I want all of you. Not a challenge, not just your body. I want to be a family again. You, me, and Abigail. But first, you're going to do your job as a husband. And you're going to like it."

"Garrett, please you don't have to do this." Will begged, backing away on his knees, trying to get away.

"No, but you're lucky I am. I could just give up on you. Kill you, me, and Abigail. I'd have no trouble at all putting a bullet through your heads. But I want a family again. You're my husband. Until death do us part."

"Garrett." He whimpered.

"Sit down, slut. I'm going to fix you, once and for all."

Will felt paralyzed. Couldn't move. Couldn't breathe. Couldn't think. He just sat there on his knees, staring at the door, trying to calculate, formulate a route of escape, how he can get to the door without ending up with a bullet through his head. Before he could think straight enough to even come up with a plot, a route, an escape plan, Garrett's rough hands, the hands that had once felt so protective and strong but now felt hard and calloused and diseased, wrapped around his throat, pulling his face toward him so that they were making eye-contact, Garrett jerking his head every time he tried to divert his gaze.

"Don't you even think about it, sweetheart. You try anything funny, anything at all, and I pull this trigger. But the bullet doesn't go through your head. It goes through Hannibal's. And then I'm going to take Abigail. My biological daughter. The one thing she'll never be to you. Because you love her, but you don't see part of you. You see part of me... But before I take her, I'll tie you to this bed and finish what I started. And then I won't be so gentle. Because you'll have pissed me off at that point, and I'll be angry, and I'll have no other choice but to take it out on you. We don't want that, do we?" Garrett hissed, voice sweet and high and all-too-put-together. Talking to him like he was talking to a child.

Will just nodded, opting to follow orders rather than fight. He couldn't risk it. He couldn't risk Hannibal's life, his Hannibal, his lover that was already bleeding in the other room. He sure as hell couldn't risk Abigail's life. She had been fighting so hard to regain her life after Garrett. He wasn't taking her away from him. He wasn't going to touch her. The day they left, Will vowed to protect her like she was his own. And he wasn't about to give that up right then. Never. Abigail was his daughter, just as much as she was Garrett's. More so, even. And then there was Hannibal. His Hannibal. He couldn't let him die, not like this. Will knew how they were supposed to die. They were supposed to get some fairytale ending. Die together in each other's arms as they drifted into that great unknown. Not like this. Not brutal or painful. However this was going to go, Will was going to have to hold off Garrett until they could

save themselves. He didn't know if anyone would save them. But until then, he would take whatever the hell Garrett threw at him. Because he loved the two people outside of those doors too much.

The realization that this was going to have to happen, the realization that this brutal torment at the hands of his husband would have to happen to protect the people he loved, was a sudden moment of complete clarity. And for a moment, rather than shaking apart, he felt brave. Valiant.

Hannibal's voice, soft and kind and protective, rang through his ears again.

Didesnės meilės Niekas neturi nei tai , kad žmogus savo gyvybę už draugus

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

~

Garrett walked around the room, eyes gazing over the walls that looked to hold torture devices, devices meant for pain and, subsequently, pleasure. He hummed quietly, somewhere between approval and apathy, like he was impressed by the collection but didn't actually plan on doing anything with it, like the way you might walk past mediocre art in a souvenir shop. It's not bad, per se, but it's nothing magnificent. It's not Van Gogh or Picasso. It doesn't pop. The nonchalance in his voice put Will on edge even more, like he hardly even cared about what he was about to do. This was nothing to him.

Or worse. It was something. And it was something enjoyable.

Something fun.

Will felt sick.

His gaze slowly drifted around the room, half-admiring Hannibal's work, his kinks and the such. The gun never left Will's head, aimed straight at him. He wasn't going to run anyways. He wasn't going to risk it. He wasn't going to risk the life of his daughter. Of his lover. He wasn't going to risk them. Maybe it would be alright if he died. But he couldn't live with himself knowing that Hannibal or Abigail had been hurt because of him. So he stayed put, breathing shaky and heavy. He stayed put because he had nowhere else to go. He was done fighting.

"I could use any of this. I could tie you down. Whip you. But I'd rather use my hands. Or... I'll make this good for you. You're lucky that I'm not doing this just to hurt you. This will be different than the first time. This will fix you, and then you'll give it to me any time I want it, and we'll be a happy family instead of a miserable one. I won't have to hit you or Abigail anymore. This is a good thing, Will. Remember that. This is a good thing. Get on the bed."

"Garrett, please, I don't want to-" Will started.

"GET ON THE FUCKING BED!" He screamed.

Will didn't hesitate or protest after that. His legs trembling beneath him, he nodded vigorously and forced himself to stand against protesting limbs. He walked shakily over toward the bed, practically collapsing against it. He felt a sudden calm fill him, if only for a few moments, when he caught a whiff of Hannibal. It was Hannibal, just Hannibal. He didn't smell the perfume of a woman, or the musky smell of another man. He just smelled Hannibal, plain and simple. This distinct smell that he couldn't entirely identify, that he didn't entirely know how to name or place with his mind buzzing with fear like this, but it brought a certain amount of ease. Like Hannibal was right there with him, holding his hand through this hell. Not there to save him. Just there to comfort him. To protect his mind.

Will let out a small noise of protest as Garrett's hands jerked roughly at his pants, tugging them off, the denim burning against his skin as he pulled them away. He closed his eyes, refusing to look as Garrett studied him over.

"Oh, you're hard for me already, aren't you, Will? Asexual my ass. Look at you." Garrett cooed as tears began to perk at Will's eyes, hands grasping at the sheets. He couldn't run. He couldn't speak. He couldn't do anything.

Will knew he had an erection. He'd had them before, albeit not that often. Occasional morning wood, or they'd spring up whenever he was having a panic attack. They were brought on by fear and sleep, but never arousal. This time was no different. He wasn't aroused, didn't want this. This was brought on by absolute sheer terror. And the rational side of his brain knew this. But part of him felt guilty and believed Garrett's words. He wanted this brought on him. He did this to himself. He brought this upon himself. It was his fault that he was being raped.

"It is such a waste that this pretty cock of yours has gone to waste for all of these years. 40 fucking years. You're so big, so pretty like this... Oh, it's going to feel good to be inside of you, isn't it, pretty?" He hissed, voice absolutely maniacal.

It made him uncomfortable, his stomach turning at the words. He didn't like being talked about like that. He didn't want to be loved for his body. His mind was much more valuable. Hearing these praises, these disgusting words dribbling from his mouth like vomit. He didn't want to be seen like this, so vulnerable, so open. He didn't like it. He wanted to close in on himself, pull his pants back on and hide beneath the covers. Panic was taking over his mind, making it hard to form coherent thoughts. His chest was heaving, breathing heavy and shaky and painful, like a rock was sitting dead in the center of his chest. He couldn't breathe.

Will refused to look up, rather turning his head into the sheets, trying his hardest to get another whiff of Hannibal. Anything to calm him down, anything to soothe his aching chest as he grasped at the sheets, praying for this to all just be over, praying for someone to come to his rescue. Someone to come haul Garrett Jacob Hobbs away, someone to save him, someone to protect him. He needed a savior. He needed a hero. But there was no one coming. Abigail was fast asleep. Hannibal was dying in the floor. Not that he wanted either of them in the middle of this, risk their lives for him. He was either going to talk his way out of this, or sit there and take it.

"Please, Garrett... You don't have to do this." Will begged.

"No, but I want to." Garrett chuckled.

It was the most likely going to be the latter. He let out a small whine of discomfort, of pain, of sheer and utter horror, as Garrett's hard, calloused fingers ghosted over his penis, touching him gently but with malice in his fingertips. This was not an act of love like he tried to claim. This wasn't him trying to fix him because he genuinely thought that was what he wanted, what he needed. Not that Will would forgive him for that, either. But no. This... This was cold, calculated... This was pure, ruthless selfishness. His fingers grazed over the sensitive skin, the skin that had hardly been touched, certainly not in a sexual manner. He never masturbated, never had sex with anyone, not really. He squirmed beneath his touch, hating that the sensation itself felt almost good. He hated himself, wondering if Garrett was right. What if he really did do this to himself? What if he really did put himself in these situations because he wanted to get raped. That was Garrett's reasoning. What if he was right all along?

Will felt sick as he squirmed beneath his touch, trying to get away, trying to move, trying to break free. Begging to be set free. But it wasn't going to happen.

He grabbed Will's knees and jerked them upright, holding his legs in the air as he inspected, eyes devouring him like a piece of meat. Will tensed, his instinct telling him to kick, to fight, to run and flee, but he knew that he couldn't without putting a death sentence on Hannibal's head. Fighting would get him nowhere. Garrett's hands ghosted down his thighs, toward the cleft of his ass. Will let out a choked sound as he closed his eyes, trying to choke back the tears that were so close to coming now. He wanted to run, wanted to hide, wanted to save himself. But he couldn't. Some words of a song came to his mind, a song half forgotten, something that he couldn't quite place. Perhaps he'd heard Abigail listening to it, or perhaps it was a song from a past life. But the words came into his mind and brought the sense of bravery back, feeling rather like a valiant warrior than a victim, saving the ones around him by sacrificing himself.

Save yourself, I'll hold them back.

Still feeling sick to his stomach but just a bit braver, he choked back a scream as Garrett's dry finger shoved itself into him, without warning or hesitation. He bit out a choked sound as he grasped at the sheets at his sides, the feeling vastly unpleasant, stinging and burning around his finger as it shoved itself up to the second knuckle before pulling away. It was a harsh burn, and it made him feel full in a way that he didn't like. He choked back the sound, trying not to enrage Garrett any further. The more noise he made, the angrier Garrett would become... And he wasn't sure how much of this, the torture, the utter torment, he could take.

"Fuck, you are tight. I didn't get to properly enjoy you the first time, being so drunk and all, so I'm going to take my time here." Garrett chuckled, his accent slipping through. He had hailed from the south, but his accent had slowly dissipated, but occasionally it would come back, as it was doing right then.

"Please." Was the only word that Will could manage to choke out.

"It's okay, baby." Garrett cooed as Will squirmed beneath his touch.

"Please, I don't want-"

"IT DOESN'T MATTER! It doesn't matter what you want, because you don't know what you want yet. I'll show you what you really want, baby. It'll all be okay."

Will let out a choked sound. This was worse than drunk, pissed off Garrett. Cold, calculated, bittersweet Garrett was always worse. The way he cooed and made him feel like a child, the way that he acted like he wasn't capable of making his own decisions, the way he treated him like he couldn't possibly hate sex... It left Will with an even more sour taste in his mouth as he squirmed beneath his touch, watching with a strangled voice as he sucked on a finger and pressed against his hole again, the spit leaving a terrible texture on his skin, causing his toes to curl and a small whine to be stripped from his throat, hating the feeling of it.

But that whine was misconstrued as Garrett leaned in close, pushing it past the ring of tight muscle, pulling a small grunt of pain past his lips, head spinning with the stinging. God, it hurt... It was a familiar pain, a pain that still haunted his nightmares, an ache that he could still feel when he was in the place between consciousness and sleep. It was the sting that plagued him for days after the first time... And it was happening all over again. And there was nothing that he could do to stop it without risking the life of Hannibal. He wasn't going to take the risk.

"So fucking tight... Jesus, you are a pretty thing. It's such a damned shame we didn't get to do this sooner. Oh well. I say, after we get out of here, we go on a honeymoon. And I'll get to have you to myself every night of it. We'll get Abigail a separate room... She's a big girl, she can take care of herself... And I'll fuck you hard every single night we're there. How does that sound, baby? Does that sound good?" He hummed.

"No, Garrett, please, don't-" Will whimpered

"What's that? I couldn't hear you over your boyfriend's crying. Sounds like he's only got a little time left. Maybe I should put him out of his misery... What were you saying?" Garrett hissed.

"Yes." Will squeaked, knowing that was what he wanted to hear. Knowing it would be what kept Hannibal alive.

"Yes what?"

"Yes, it does sound good." He squeaked. A lie.

"Good boy." Garrett whispered, working his fingers deeper into him, shoving two fingers hard into his body, spearing hard into him as Will let out a choked sob of pain.

It felt too harsh, too dry, like this. His saliva wasn't enough to make it comfortable, to make it okay. It stung like hell, hurt like hell. But Will didn't say another word, the ringing in his ears and in his head being too much for him to focus on anything but the ceiling and the pain. He choked down the noises until Garrett added a second finger, drooling over him as he did so, making the texture unpleasant and the pain no more tolerable. He let out a scream of pain as Garrett's fingers worked him open, too fast, too harsh, too rough.

Will heard Hannibal scream from the next room, pulling him back into reality. It wasn't a strangled cry of pain, but rather a desperate shout, like he was trying to stop Garrett using his voice. As if his voice, sweet and soft and soothing, the voice that let him into sleep would be enough to fight off the intruder, would be enough to stop him, would be enough to save them all, to turn back the clock so that Garrett had never come, so that Garrett had never even been born. Never even existed. But no such thing happened.

"Please, just call him an ambulance. He's hurt." Will begged as Garrett pulled his fingers away harshly.

"Doesn't matter. You don't belong to him anymore. It doesn't matter if he dies while I'm doing this to you, or if he dies on our way out when I shoot him in the head. You're never going to see him again, because we're going to be a fucking happy family." He hissed.

Tears were brimming his eyes and soaking his cheeks at this point. How were they going to get out of this hell this time? Would they be so lucky?

"I could use lube. Would be the proper thing to do... But I'm going to fuck you the way God intended. Spit is good enough for me." Garrett chuckled to himself, spitting into his hand and undoing the top button of his jeans, pulling out his dick. It was the only dick that Will had properly seen besides his own before, and it still plagued his dreams. All of that man plagued his nightmares. Will closed his eyes, letting the fat tears roll from his eyes as Garrett positioned himself and slicked himself with spit. This would hurt.

The fat, slick head of Garrett's cock pressed against his barely-open, barely-slick entrance. If the rape itself weren't bad enough, the pain, the sheer pain, was going to be worse. Will choked back the dread and grabbed the pillow to the left of him, pulling it over his face and biting down, a gesture at which Garrett moaned loudly, like the simple movement was satisfying. Will knew the pain to come and choked back his dread, trying his best to hear Hannibal's voice in his memory, desperate to return to a happier time. A time when he was at peace and the world wasn't burning and this wasn't happening. A time when he wasn't afraid.

"Lean back." Hannibal instructed as he sat down his sketchpad and pencil, and without questioning, Will obeyed.

He had an overwhelming amount of trust for this man. He wasn't afraid of being touched by him. He wasn't afraid of being hurt by him. He inhaled as Hannibal propped himself up on his knees, reaching forward, leaning over Will. Hannibal's legs were propped on either side of Will's, spread around his body, Hannibal's body perfectly in line with Will's. Will stayed perfectly still as Hannibal lowered himself over Will, holding him tightly, putting all of his weight on Will.

For someone else, perhaps it would've been strange. But the touch was an overwhelming comfort, making him feel safe again. Hannibal Lecter was the only man who could make him feel safe in a touch, like there was absolutely nothing for him to be afraid of. Nothing could hurt him. No one could damage him. Nothing could shatter him again. All the demons in his head hushed for just a moment in time as Hannibal's lips peppered his neck and behind his ear with soft grazes of his lips.

Beautiful.

He pushed.

Will choked out a scream at the intrusion, forced back into reality. The head of his cock pressed into his body, pushing slowly into him in a painful drag. He felt full. Full in a way that he most certainly didn't like. He felt a small scream rising inside of his chest as he pushed in more, moving too fast, pushing in too hard. He wondered if this was supposed to feel good, like Garrett had promised. It was still against his will, but it would've been better if it didn't hurt so goddamn much, forcing short, sputtered screams from him as he sank in further.

He pulled out slowly, the painful drag burning inside of him.

Then his angle changed and Will knew what he was talking about.

The pain was still there. The fear and the terror and the desire to flee were still there. The idea of sex was still repulsive and this was still fucking terrifying. But he felt it, a feeling that made his stomach jump, a feeling like electricity, zinged through his body. His toes curled instinctively and, despite his fear and terror and screams, he let out a long, low moan. A moan he hated himself for.

"Oh, you like that, don't you, slut?" Garrett cooed, pulling out and pushing in again, thrusts gaining speed.

Will's sounds came out between screams of pain and moans he couldn't control, ones he didn't want to let out but couldn't keep in. Maybe he would've liked the feeling, but it mostly just felt overwhelming. Even if the pain weren't there, even if he had consented to this horrible fate, he would've been overwhelmed by the sensation. It would've sent him spiraling in overstimulation that would leave his heart pounding and his chest heaving and his head spinning. All the while, Garrett's thrusts picked up speed.

There was so much burning as he buried deeper and deeper into his ass, striking his prostate with expert precision each time, leaving Will crying, shaking, ragged sobs. It could've felt good, but it felt like he was being scraped from the inside, like his insides were being absolutely shredded. Will's hands stayed at his aides as Garrett held his knees and shoved into him. All that Will could see we're the erratic, jerky movements of his hips. This was the man that he had married what felt like lifetimes ago now. This was the man he had loved.

Look at him now.

Then Garrett grabbed onto his cock and Will's screaming became unrestrained. He couldn't keep it in anymore. He couldn't hold it back. The sensation was too much and he felt like he was going to burst, every muscle twitching and tensing. It didn't feel good, not really. Not with the burning in his ass and the calloused, rough hand jerking at his most sensitive member. His prostate being pounded against, those calloused hands spreading the messy, clear liquid down his shaft, making a mess and causing more tears to come to his eyes from the god-awful texture... Maybe it was good for someone else, but not him. This... This was hell.

And then... It wasn't.

Hannibal's arms were around him and whispering words of peace, words he didn't understand, words he couldn't hold onto, words falling through his fingertips like grains of sand. A strange, shaky sensation washed over him, a sensation that almost felt good. He could feel wet heat filling him up, and washing over him like a tidal wave, pulling over his chest. Warmth, unpleasant texture, but warmth. He let out a loud, long moan, practically feeling his lover, his real lover, around him again, bringing him a new sense of peace amidst all the fear. His breathing grew heavier but deeper, rather than the short, loud, shallow breaths before.

It felt warm. It felt exciting and heart pounding and calming all at once. It was like the pain was over, dwindling quickly as the release came over him. It felt like the tension and the overwhelming feeling of having all of those sensitive areas stimulated released. Release. That was what it felt like. He hardly had his wits about him as the world faded around him, Garrett slowly disappearing and the pain dissipating. He still felt sore and raw, but the pain of his jerky movements, that was gone. He was okay. Perhaps a fevered dream, perhaps a hallucination, perhaps just a sense, but he could feel Hannibal holding him. Protecting him. Putting an end to this hell and whispering forgotten vows, swearing that it would all be okay. *Mylimasis.*

~

And then a gunshot.

And he was standing all of a sudden. Cum and blood were covering him, dripping from between his thighs and covering his chest.

Abigail was crying.

Hannibal's arms were around him.

And then all that was left was silence.

Chapter End Notes

Should I have touched this subject in this way? Probably not. Why did I? Because I needed to work through my own problems. This is my first and last rape scene, swear. More focus will be put on the aftermath, because I still need to deal with my own aftermaths. I need to figure out how to work through my problems, and you know how I do that? Through Will fucking Graham. So take it or leave it, love me or hate me, I'm glad I'm writing this. I feel bad about hurting Will, but, in the words of my girlfriend, it's my job to make it all alright again. For him. And myself.

-Dan.

Pistols at Dawn

The pain in his side was blinding.

He didn't care.

There was blood and wine everywhere, and he couldn't stand. He couldn't pull himself to his feet, couldn't will himself to stand, couldn't fix himself. He couldn't save his lover, he couldn't save Will. He felt his chest tighten as he let out a loud sob, hearing his lover inside the room. His room. God, what was he doing to him? What was Garrett Jacob Hobbs doing to his William? His screams were so pained and so desperate that it made him want to vomit, to roll over and die, made him ache in a way that was far, far worse than any pain that his physical body could ever even begin to cause him.

Will.

Hannibal let out cries that hardly sounded human, somewhere between agonized and desperate, pain in his physical body and even more so in his mind. Will's screams were the only things louder and more horrible than his own. His screams tore through the night like he was being murdered, and he supposed part of him was. What innocence he still had, however much that may be, was being brutally murdered at the hand of Garrett Jacob Hobbs. Not in a blind rage of drunk fury, but in cold, calculated rape. His screams of terror mixed with moans of pleasure sent Hannibal into a rage, knowing what this man was doing. Knowing what was happening to Will. His Will. Will's body was betraying him, reacting without his want or consent. Genitals, after all, did not understand consent.

"Hannibal?" Abigail cried from the stairwell.

"Abigail." Hannibal breathed, voice coming out hoarse and strained from the screaming.

"What happened?" She whispered, voice sounding absolutely frantic as she hurried down the steps. Her hair was tied back and she looked drugged with sleep, but there she was, hurrying down his stairs with her father's rifle tucked beneath her arm. She knew something happened. She had come prepared for this.

Good.

"Your father. He's here. He has Will." Hannibal sputtered out.

"Oh my god, what the fuck is he doing to him?" Abigail muttered with a slight warbling in her voice, like she might start crying.

"He said that they were going to consummate the marriage. Help me up."

Obedient, she hurried toward him and knelt down, free arm wrapping around his shoulders, helping him to feet as he grimaced in pain, the pain in his side amplifying. He was hurt... But as the sound of Will's screams of pain and protest grew louder, the adrenaline kicked in,

coursing through his veins, and the pain in his side faded into the background, like the static of the television in the living room of his childhood home, like the music in the elevator of the hospital where he left his sister's body, like the ringing in his ears when the dirty, greedy bastard he called his father died. Numbness and background noise.

And all that mattered was one thing. Will.

Protect Will Graham.

"Are you alright? Were you hit?" Abigail inquired, eyes roaming the wine and blood that drenched his side.

"Unimportant." Was all that Hannibal could get out.

Unimportant. His own pain, whatever remained of it, was unimportant. His own wellbeing, his own safety, his own whatever, was unimportant. All that mattered now was that Will. Perhaps he was all that had ever mattered. Perhaps Hannibal had gone through his life feeling this deep feeling of dissatisfaction, this deep emptiness that cut to the core of him, because he hadn't had William. His William. Perhaps this was stupidly premature. It was definitely stupidly premature. But their relationship was far from normal. Neither of them could put into words how deeply their love ran, how fast and insane it had become and how much that Hannibal loved it. And now, now more than ever, all that mattered was saving Will Graham.

He struggled to keep his footing at first, but soon he was practically in a sprint. Protect Will Graham. Those were the only words running through his mind. With sudden bursts of strength fueled by nothing but the mewls and screams of his lover being tortured, he kicked the door in, not minding the fact that those were doors handcrafted specifically for some of his more... Intimate desires. He didn't care if they had cost him a small fortune, didn't care if he had whatever remains of sentiment in those doors, having strung his Bedelia up from the chains embedded in it many a time. He didn't care about the pain burning in his side or the fact that the man inside the room had a gun or the fact that he was possibly bleeding out. He didn't care. He just kicked the door open.

Garrett was at the peak of his orgasm, release shuddering inside of Will as he lay beneath him. Will was lying there beneath him, Garrett's cock sheathed inside of him... The sight, seeing his lover's husband coming inside of him, like he was marking his territory inside of his Will... Hannibal couldn't decide whether what he felt was outrage or grief and overbearing heartbreak.

And then there was Will. Sweet, tortured Will. His Will.

Will was on his back, lying there and squirming and moaning, no longer shrieking in pain as Garrett released him, quickly pulling his rapidly softening cock out of Will and tucking it back into his pants, noticing the two of them. Will didn't seem to notice that they were in there. He seemed lost, lost in his own head, lost somewhere else. Hannibal's heart was racing and he felt lightheaded. His eyes were on Will, hopeless in despair and pain and misery as he watched his lover squirm untouched as hot volleys of cum shot from his cock.

Hannibal's chest felt hollow as he stared, studying his lover over in full for the first time. There were red trails raked down his chest from Garrett's fingernails. His hole was stretched painfully, red with the blood that was perking up from the intrusion with not near enough lubrication. It was full and leaking with Garrett's ejaculate, dripping onto the satin sheets beneath him. Will's eyes were closed, and he looked almost completely blissful, like the pain that he had been feeling was gone. His back was arched and there were short, whimpering noises coming up from his throat. He came, cock untouched, and continued despite the lack of stimulation. He came hard, and there was so much of it, it all shooting up over his chest and stomach...

Garrett had done this to him. It lacked elegance. It was an act of selfishness. If this were to ever happen, Hannibal had wanted it to be him to give it to him. If anything like this were ever to happen, Hannibal wanted him to be worshiped, his body treated with the reverence it deserved. But Garrett did this to him, leaving him battered, bloodied, scarred... Will would have to deal with the aftermath of this, and learning to recover from this hell was going to be a battle. It was already a battle. Will already had nightmares about this man. Will was already terrified of him... And now he had returned for a second helping. Hannibal felt sick. Repulsed at this.

Will came a lot, more cum than what Hannibal had ever seen. Perhaps he'd never had an orgasm before. It was a strange idea. Hannibal had his first orgasm when he was a young teenager, and had had countless more since then, so the idea that Will had gone all of these years having never experienced it... Seeing him sprawled there, the hot semen shooting against his bare chest, looking tortured and battered and somehow completely at ease for just a moment before it would all come back to him. And it would all come back to him in time, all that had happened to him, and it would hurt like all hell. And it would be hard to bring the light back to his eyes. The light that he saw when they were dancing, the light that he saw when he looked at Abigail, the light he saw when he was sitting in the floor with his dogs, the light he saw as the first rays of daylight streamed through the window... That light would be so hard to get back now.

Maybe he would've been beautiful like this, under different circumstances. He was a good 8 inches, at least. His muscles weren't overly evident but still there, sculpted, drenched with his sweat. His hair was matted to his forehead and he was panting, breathing heavy and loud between his short whimpers of... Something. Pleasure. It was pleasure. His body in orgasm, his mind going blank, the peak of human pleasure... But it didn't make it consensual in the slightest. Genitalia does not understand consent, and it simply reacts as it should in order to procreate. That was what this was. So it wasn't surprising that this part would feel... Well, good. But in the aftermath, any pleasure and any satisfaction that had been there while he lay there, squirming and moaning... It would dissipate and when he woke again, there would be nothing than pain and fear. Hannibal's chest just felt hollow.

How unnecessary, how horrible, how painful. This wasn't something that people just recover from overnight. The physical wounds, the blood that was smeared down his thighs now, the claw-marks down his chest... They would heal. That would heal. But the psychological wounds, having someone take your freedom with a gun to your head... That was going to take years to heal.

Hannibal intended to be right at his side through all of it.

"You need to get the fuck out." Abigail growled at Garrett, aiming the gun at him.

"Abby, sugar... I came so we could be a family again. This... This was all so that we could be a family again. See, he likes it." Garrett cooed, gesturing toward Will, whose body slowly relaxed as the last of his ejaculate dribbled from his cock before quickly softening again.

Will's eyes opened slowly, drowsily, staring up at the ceiling. His brain was rushing with chemicals, hormones that would block out the pain. Maybe he felt like he was floating, but the feeling would wear off soon, and then the pain would start. He'd notice the sticky warmth of blood and cum between his legs and feel the burning and the stretching and the pressure inside of him soon enough. But right then, Will didn't even notice all of this. It was like he was somewhere else, completely zoned out. Perhaps his brain was trying to block out the pain, trying to build a wall between himself and the pain of the reality.

"First, we should probably get this snobby little prick out of the way. Then we can take some of his shit and we can leave. Just the three of us. Maybe we'll go to the beach. You'd like that, wouldn't you, Abby? I took you with your mom when you were a baby, and Jesus, did you love it. You liked the water. Do you want to go back? It can be Will and I's honeymoon, and..." Garrett mused like a psychopath.

"Get the fuck out!" Abigail screamed, voice coming out as hoarse and desperate and afraid.

"Baby girl, don't you want to be a family again?"

"You were never my family, you piece of shit. Will's my family. Hannibal's my family. Our dogs are my family. You were the person that put a roof over my head for 16 years and nothing more. You were never my father, and you sure as hell were never family to me. So get. The fuck. Out."

Garrett looked as wounded as a psychopath could be, which wasn't very. He raised his hands, holding them in surrender, giving a curt nod as he headed toward the door, letting himself out as Abigail kept the rifle trained on him. Hands raised in surrender as he walked past Dr. Lecter, his eyes found him and stared with a smug smirk, running him up and down, examining the damage done to him, almost like he was taking pride in his work. Hannibal felt vulnerable and exposed and enraged as he stood there, gulping back the sting of rage.

"Oh, Dr. Lecter. When you become just like me... I hope you enjoy the way I taste." Garrett taunted with a devilish smirk, giving an arrogant nod back toward Will, the remnants of Garrett Jacob Hobbs still buried inside of him.

There was a flash of movement as Garrett's arms swung down.

And then there was a bang.

And Garrett's gun was skidding across the floor.

Hannibal couldn't fully process the movement, the loss of blood being too much for him to take it all in. He blinked quickly, trying to process it as Abigail dropped the gun and cupped her hands over her mouth, staring in horror at what she had just done. What she had just done to the man that had given her life, that had brought her into this world. He had pulled a gun. He was going to shoot him, maybe all of them, triple homicide and suicide... And Abigail had killed him before he could.

Gunshot wound to the back of the head. Blood pooled on the floor beneath them, and there was a crack in the wall where the bullet had planted itself. It had gone all the way through him. There was no way that the man had survived.

Abigail had killed her own father. Abigail Hobbs, innocent, lovely, so bright and full of life and potential, had become a killer.

Abigail Hobbs was a killer.

She was shattering, crumbling, splintering, breaking as she stood there, looking like she couldn't stand much longer, like she was about to fall to her knees, but couldn't even do that. She let out a ragged cry, so wretched and broken that Hannibal wanted to buckle beneath her and hold her until the world stopped shaking, wanted to take care of of her until this all passed and it was okay again. He wanted to step in and be her father now, in the way that Will had done for her once upon a time. He wanted to hold her now and tell her everything was going to be okay, even though it was something that he couldn't guarantee, something that he couldn't promise. Watching her stare at the horror of what she had just done was heartbreaking, and he wanted nothing more than to hold her, tell her these empty promises, let her know that everything would be alright, even though there was a very good chance that it would never be alright again.

But there were more important things.

Hannibal turned toward Will again, who was now standing up. Hannibal wasn't sure when that had happened, but he was on his feet, swaying back and forth slightly as he stood, still looking dazed, like his mind was lit ablaze with too many thoughts and it was burning him out, and all that was left behind his eyes was smoke. Black, clouded smoke. Smoke licking at every inch of him, swirling in his mind, in his blood, in his veins, in his bones, down to the very core of him. It was just ash and smoke and confusion and fear. The small look of bliss on his face was gone now, and all that was left was a blank look, like a deer caught in the headlights of an oncoming truck. And he just stood there. Just... Stood. Lifeless. Unblinking, unmoving, unthinking. Lifeless.

His hair was still matted down to his forehead. His chest was still heaving, heavy with every labored breath that he tried to force. His eyes were staring, glassy, staring into a vast, infinite universe of space that none but him could lay eyes upon. His shoulders were held back, his entire body completely tensed, every muscle held tautly, like he might fall apart if he weren't wound as tightly as he was. He was drenched in cum and blood, completely covered in it. Blood was smeared down his thighs, down to the backs of his knees. Garrett's cum was mingled with it, dripping down his legs, pooling on the floor. Will's chest and stomach were covered in his own as it began to dry slowly, sticking to him, threatening somehow to never come off, like a stain that would be imprinted into him for the rest of his life.

Hannibal's gait was slow and labored and careful as he walked toward his lover in a haze. Will hardly seemed to notice him, eyes, still caught staring into the void.

"William?" Hannibal whispered gently, trying to rouse him from this dissociative state, trying to bring him back from the void and back into his arms.

No reply.

"Will?" Hannibal whispered, voice coming out as more of a squeak.

Nothing.

He wasn't sure what else to do. In the haze, with all of the blood loss, he couldn't think straight. So disregarding the mess, he wrapped his arms around Will, trying to bring him back, trying to hold him, trying to tether him to reality, trying to be his anchor. That was what he needed. He needed an anchor. He needed something to hold onto, something to pull him back. And Hannibal would be that anchor. He would gladly be that anchor for him. Holding on tightly to the shell of his lover, trying to pull him back, he pressed a small kiss behind his ear, lips pressed into his skin softly, drawing as much strength from Will as Will would hopefully draw from him as they stood there...

Will slumped over in his grasp, leaning into his touch, suddenly becoming human again.

That was when the tears started rolling.

He didn't know who started crying first, whether it was him or Will. But they fell together, pressed against one another, both sobbing. Will pulled closer to Hannibal than what he had expected. Part of him had expected him to pull away, to not want to be touched, which would've been understandable to say the least. But the comfort he seemed to get from the touch was overwhelming, forcing Hannibal into another bout of tears as he held his lover close, refusing to ever let him go again. He made sure that any movements he made were slow and calculated, so not to startle Will, making sure that he was going to be alright.

"I'm sorry." Will sobbed.

"No... Don't be sorry. Never be sorry. You've done nothing wrong. You've done absolutely nothing wrong. This is not your fault, Will. It's okay..." Hannibal whispered.

"I didn't mean to... I didn't mean to... I couldn't stop it, I'm sorry."

"Hush, William. It's okay. Darling, you've nothing to be sorry for. You've done nothing wrong."

"I didn't mean to... It was an accident... I just... I didn't know how to stop it, and I didn't know how to prevent it, and I didn't know what to do, and it just... I'm sorry, Hannibal. I'm sorry, I love you, I'm so sorry."

"Shh... Shh... Darling, It's going to be alright, Will. I'll take care of you. Let me take care of you."

"No... No... You're hurt, I..."

"Shh... Don't worry for me. Think of me, let my presence, let my words, let whatever you need from me, bring you peace. But do not worry for me, my love. Do not think of me with fear and dread. I don't want that. I'm going to be alright. Just hush... Hush..."

Will melted into his embrace again, any tension relieved as he clung tightly to the older man, holding onto him like his life depended on it, like he might fall apart if he didn't. Stroking down his curls, Hannibal held onto him as tightly as he could, desperate to make all of this okay again, desperate to make the pain go away, desperate to go back to how they were. Happy. Calm. Finally at peace. Just glad to be together.

"You need to rest. This has been... Traumatic at the least. I will call the police, explain everything. I have cameras filming in this room, so I can provide them with evidence to what happened. There should be very little hassle, and I cannot imagine that they will need you for any of this. You can rest. I will call the police, tend to my wounds, and I will join you. It will take time, but I have no doubt that you will recover, and you will be okay. All of this will pass, and you will get through it. And this time, you will not have to be alone. Okay?" Hannibal whispered, pressing his lips against his ear.

Will just nodded.

Slowly separating from him, pulling away and scanning him over. Their messes had mingled, the cum and wine and blood all over both of them now. It hardly mattered. They could clean off later. They could move on later. They could dust themselves off later. Right then, they just needed rest. Will just needed to rest.

"Can you walk?" Hannibal inquired. He'd been penetrated before by well-endowed men and larger objects, and without proper lubrication, it can ache for days. Will didn't to appear to have been prepared at all. No slowly working him open, opening him slowly until he relaxed and opened up enough to make it comfortable for both parties. It appeared that Garrett had simply shoved himself in, using nothing more than what precum had built up and perhaps a bit of saliva to lubricate his Will. He would be feeling this, and aching from it, for weeks. Hannibal would gladly care for him, try what he could to make the pain go away, but it was something that was just going to have to fade on its own over time.

"I think so. I don't think the adrenaline has worn off yet, so it doesn't hurt right now. It's going to be hell in the morning though, isn't it?" Will muttered.

"It is morning... But yes, most likely. He's drawn blood, and quite a bit. I'll have to clean it later. But it can wait."

Will just nodded and took a shaky step forward before his eyes found the body lying in the floor. Then he stopped again, the thousand mile gaze into the void coming back to him, paralyzed at the sight of the man who had just violated him lying dead in the floor. Hannibal's hand reached out for his, grasping him tightly, holding onto him, trying desperately to bring him back, to tether him to reality, to not let him drift off again. He didn't need to drift away where Hannibal couldn't reach him, where he couldn't be found. He needed to stay here, needed...

"Is he dead?" Will whispered.

"Yes." Hannibal answered shortly.

Will pulled away from Hannibal's grasp, pulling his fingers away from Hannibal's. He stepped around the body, staring down at it, staring at the man who had done unspeakable things to him... Will stepped closer to Abigail. Will wore nothing, completely bare, but none of them seemed to notice, not really. As they stood there, the three of them, with so many horrors running through their minds, it didn't seem to really matter. A few fingers grazed over Abigail's shoulder, over the scar on her neck.

"Abigail killed him?" He whispered.

Abigail's sobs wretched louder as he said it, putting it into words for the first time, showing her horrendous acts the light of day. She buckled over as if she were in pain, face buried in her hands as she stood there, body shaking, quivering as she sobbed.

"Yes." Hannibal answered.

"It's okay." Will whispered, pressing his lips against Abigail's temple.

Will's eyes found the gun. Garrett's gun, laying in the carpet in a pool of blood, though none of them were sure whose blood it was at this point. The whole room was drenched in red, all of them... They were covered in red, covered in blood, and it was a stain that would perhaps never fade, perhaps be burned into their skin like a marking to hold them together, to burn them alive.

Will bent down and curled his fingers around the gun.

"Dad..." Abigail muttered.

He raised his arm and nudged her back before aiming the gun and firing. The sound shattered the room, but hardly seemed to faze Will in the slightest. A look of darkness rolled over his features as his finger tensed around the trigger, shooting at the corpse of the man that he once loved. Hannibal inhaled sharply, stepping away as the corpse jerked slightly, again and again as Will fired the bullets into him, unloading them into his body.

Hannibal let him. It wasn't going to do any more damage than what was already done. Hannibal would let the police have the tapes, let them do the autopsy to reveal that the cause of death was the gunshot wound to the head. There could be complications due to this, but they could be explained, reasoned away with the excuse of temporary insanity due to the trauma that had just been inflicted onto him. He didn't touch his lover until the bullets stopped firing. Will's face looked angry and shocked and desperate and frustrated and broken as he continued to squeeze the trigger, over and over, willing it to continue, willing it to let him destroy the man that he threatened to destroy him, threatened to break him.

Hannibal's arms finally reached out when he threw the gun, slamming it into the carpet and letting out a wail so pathetic and broken that it made Hannibal's heart shatter over and over again. He wrapped his arms tightly around him, holding him as tight as he could, trying to

make the rest of the world disappear, trying to calm him down again, but something told the doctor that his lover was not going to be truly calm again for a long, long time.

"Shh... Shh... Will..." Hannibal whispered.

"That's for fucking me over, you bastard." Will shrieked at the corpse.

Hannibal slowly tugged him out of the room, struggling against him until they were out of the room, Will squirming beneath his touch, trying to fight, like he was trying to attack the monster that had hurt him. But Garrett was dead. It would do nothing but hurt Will. So Hannibal tugged him out of the room, Abigail slipping out behind them, and closed the door behind her, shutting out Garrett Jacob Hobbs, leaving him in that wretched room. The lock was broken on the door from where Hannibal had kicked it in, but it stayed closed well enough.

That was when Will collapsed in his arm. Everything inside of him was drained, and there was nothing left.

~

He could clean Will in the morning. He wasn't about to touch him unless he was awake and giving active consent. He'd been violated enough for one night. He didn't need to be touched if he couldn't give active consent. Cleaning him off could wait until morning. Will may take a shower on his own, but it would be unlikely that he'd want to stand. After penetration like that, after the brutality, it's unlikely that he'll want to walk for a few days. The likely answer is that he will wake up, still traumatized. Perhaps he'll be in a daze for awhile, give absentminded consent for Hannibal to clean his chest and stomach and thighs and, inevitably, the place most at risk for infection. His hole, all raw and bloody and hurt. Then he'd break down, and then they'd have to work on recovering together. But right then, Will was unconscious from sheer exhaustion, and lying flat on his back, tucked tightly into bed, still covered in dried blood and cum, until morning came. Or, rather, until Will awoke again. Not ideal, but it would be alright. Will would be alright. They would all find a way to be alright again. Someday.

He pressed a small, short kiss against Will's forehead, brushing a hand through his slowly drying curls. He was still a mess, and would remain that way until he awoke, but even through the blood and cum, he was still so beautiful. Eyes closed peacefully in slumber until his nightmares caught up to him again and he awoke screaming, awoke with the feeling of Garrett between his legs again, and Hannibal would need to take him back into his arms and bring him back to reality. His hair was messy, but still his, still those gorgeous curls that Hannibal ached to run his fingers through every time he laid eyes on him. His skin was flushed, leaving him looking cold and pale, but still very much alive. His lover was so beautiful, so wonderful, and deserved none of the hell that had been thrown upon him. He didn't deserve this.

His sweet, innocent Will. Will had seen terrible, terrible things in his lifetime. He had been hurt over and over again. Had been broken to the point of no return. And he deserved none of it.

He didn't deserve any of this, and it hurt Hannibal to think about what had been done to him.

He'd have to face the truth soon enough. He'd have to watch the tapes, show them to the police. He'd have to witness it all. He'd have to watch it happen to his lover all over again, watch him live it rather than just hear it. It sent a chill of terror down his spine as he pulled away and peeled off his shirt. The adrenaline was beginning to wear off, and the pain in his side was becoming more and more nagging. He would have to inspect the wound, stitch himself up. But there were more important things. Call the police, watch those godawful tapes... Comfort Abigail. It could wait. Until then, a quick clean of the wound and a bandage would suffice.

Tossing his shirt into the corner of the room, he stepped into the bathroom, knees shaky and unsteady beneath him. He had lost a lot of blood, and being just generally exhausted didn't help either. Unimportant. He caught a glimpse of himself in the mirror. Silvery hair messy, pulled into a fringe over his forehead. His skin was slick and shiny with sweat, his own and Will's. His face had several cuts, a particularly nasty one just beneath his eye, from the shattering glass. Cuts lined his entire body from the glass, but luckily, none had lodged themselves beneath the skin. Just shallow marks left by the jagged shards as they rained over him and bounced off. None of them were too horribly gory. They'd be fairly easy to clean up, probably wouldn't even need stitches. No hassle there.

And then there was the gunshot wound.

A single hole, along with a small trail of raised skin. It was a shallow wound, luckily, but the bullet had gotten lodged inside of him. He'd have to find it and remove it or else he risked infection. He bit back a wince as his fingers trailed over the wound. It would be a pain to try and dig out on his own. Part of him knew that he needed to go to a hospital, but god, it was the last thing that he wanted. He hated hospitals. Staying there... No. He could take care of himself. He had been a surgeon for years. He didn't need someone else to do a job of which he was perfectly capable.

He'd get it out later. He just grabbed a rag and wet it, cleaning the dried blood and wine away from his skin, wincing as he touched the affected skin. He bit down on his lip tightly, hissing slightly in pain as he cleaned himself up. It would be enough until the issues with the police and Abigail were dealt with. He could properly fix it when everything else was taken care of. Until then, he just quickly cleaned the wounds and wrapped himself in a bandage. It was enough. It needed to be enough.

He shrugged on a clean shirt and walked downstairs, ignoring the pain that still nagged at his side. He didn't have the time to worry about it yet. He could worry about it when everything else was sorted out. When the police were gone and they had taken Garrett's body away and Abigail was alright. Then he could worry about himself.

She was standing in the doorway.

He came down the stairs and turned into the corridor, finding her standing there rather than on the couch, where he had half expected her to be. Where he had half hoped she'd be. It'd be so much easier just to walk up to her on the couch and hold her like he oftentimes held her father. But she stood in the doorway, staring down at her father's dead and bloodied corpse. Winston was laying beside her, like he was trying to be some sort of support for her. But she hardly seemed to notice. She just stood there, immobile, looking like she wasn't even breathing...

"I killed him." She whispered as Hannibal stepped in behind her.

"I know." Hannibal replied.

"I... I just... I killed him. I killed him, Hannibal. I shot him. I could've shot him somewhere else. I could've immobilized him without... Without doing this. This was so savage, and... I did it. I killed my own father. I murdered my own father. He... He... He was a fucking bastard, but... He was still... He was still my dad. And I killed him." Her voice trembled as she stared at the body in front of her.

"It was my life or his, Abigail. And then it would've been Will's life or his. And then it would've been yours or his. Abigail, you made a decision between the two men who really love you, the men who truly want to take care of you, and the man that brought you into this world. He brought you into it, but he did not raise you. He did not care for you as he should've. That's what Will and I want to do. We just want to take care of you. We want you to be happy and healthy and safe and successful. We want you to find joy in what you do. We want you to feel joy, Abigail. Your father... He wanted to own you. We don't want to own or control you. Rather, we'd like to guide you. Walk by your side down the paths of life. You had to choose. And in that moment, you chose. You chose freedom, happiness, over the life of the man who didn't want you."

"I killed him."

"A life that needed to be taken. It was him or us, Abigail. You surely wanted him to pay for what he did to you? And if not for the things he did to you, then the things that he did to Will? This was what he deserved, Abigail. You are righteous in his execution. It's okay, my love."

"I didn't... He brought me into this world, Hannibal."

"He ejaculated into your mother. That was where his role in bringing you up ended."

"He raised me."

"He let you live under his roof, Abigail. That was where his role ended in your life. You need not feel guilt over a man who did not do anything for you. You need not feel pain for something completely necessary. It's okay, my love."

"I... I think... I want to... I want to see my dad. I... I want to see Will."

"He remains unconscious for the time being. He's been through a rather traumatic experience. I'm... Unsure of how he's going to react to touch again... After this."

"He hugged you. He... He'll... He'll be alright."

"I know he will be. But I'd like to assess his state when he awakens. Until then, I think it will be best to leave him be. But... Perhaps you can go upstairs and sleep in his room. I think... I think it will be beneficial for him to see your face first. He loves you more than anyone else. Your presence will be... A comfort."

She just nodded slightly, eyes still trained on Garrett, almost like she was afraid to look away, like he might raise from the dead if she looked away, grab her and take her away. Take them both away. Hannibal's arms instinctively found their way around her waist, pressing a small kiss at the top of her head, hoping. Hoping he could provide some small comfort, take the pain away if only for a moment.

"It will be okay. I promise."

~

There was vomit rising in his throat.

Will's screams rang through the screen, even worse than when he had heard them the first time from the other side of the door. Watching it was worse. Garrett said these godawful things to him, words that Hannibal couldn't even process as he stood there, hands clutching at the edge of the table, knuckles white.

He felt sick.

Garrett thrusting so violently into the younger man.

Will's violent screams and groans of pain.

Garrett's disgusting words, hissing into Will's ears.

His brave soldier being battered and abused and broken. *God, Will.*

Will.

His Will. His Will, pinned down. His Will with his arms pinned to the sheets, Hannibal's sheets, fists clenching and unclenching and quivering and shaking beneath his ex-husband's stronger hands. His Will, letting out short cries of pain, shrieking and begging and pleading. His Will, with tears running down his face and dripping onto the pillow beneath him. His Will. His Will. His Will.

Garrett shuddered as he came, digging his nails deep into Will's skin. The door swung open, and as Garrett pulled out quickly, roughly, Will came. Came hard. Blood and cum. Blood and screaming. *God, Will.*

Hannibal clutched his stomach and grabbed the trash can below his desk and brought it to his face. He clutched it tight and wretched into the can. He couldn't take it. Will. His Will.

They took the tape, said some weak attempt at a consolation, words blurring and blending together as he wretched, body shaking, eyes watering.

God, Will

His Will.

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